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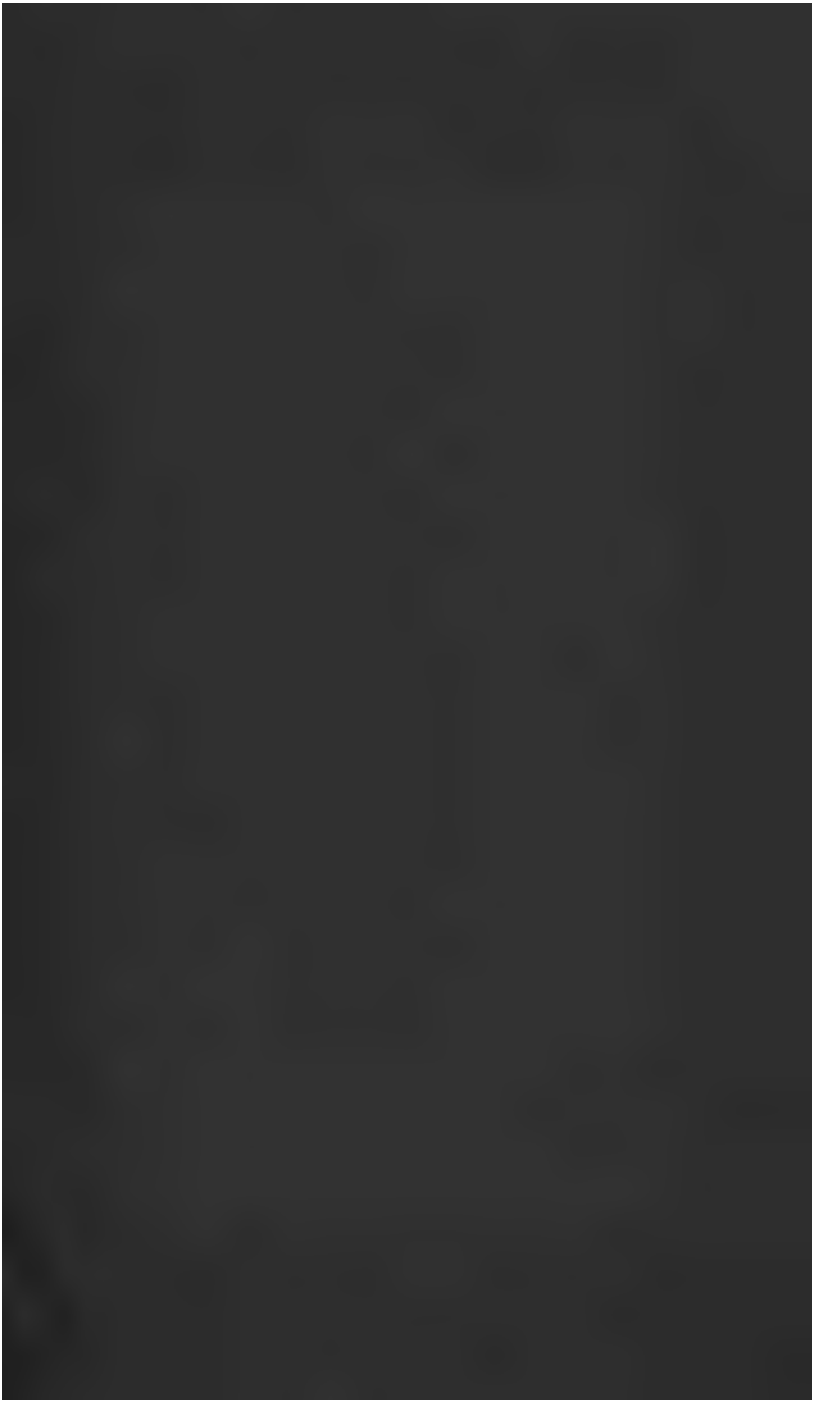

MILLICENT;

OR,

THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE CURATE OF OVERTON."

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends.
Rough-hew them how we will."

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MILLICENT.

CHAPTER I.

'The governess! the governess! oh, wearily she sits,
While midst the dazzling throng another vision flits;
A mirthful circle cometh, with footsteps swift and near,
And she is there, so joyously—but she wakes with start and tear.
The governess! the governess! her work is scorn'd and lowly,
Yet in the clear, true heavens it is counted bless'd and holy;
The white-rob'd angels tenderly their glances on it cast,
And her loving God accepteth it, with whom she rests at last!'

SHE sat alone, unpitied and forlorn, in her solitary little chamber, beside her uncorded boxes, her head leaning on her hand; and a tear—the heart's sorrow-drop—rested sadly

on her cheek, asking, in crystal tones, "Why am I here?"—yes, why was it there?—Why did the girl of eighteen weep?

The moonbeams played through the narrow panes of the high window, and twined themselves in and out of her clustering hair, and longed to comfort her; and they, too, whispered, in silvery tones,—"Why does she weep?"

She was beautiful, was that sad maiden; her soft, loving face, and gentle eyes, and her parted lips, seemed formed for the abode of smiles; yet none were there. She was good, her heart was made for soft words, and all the affection that heart can beat back to heart. Alas! poor heart, who shall love thee now?—who shall breathe words of winning tenderness like balm into thine ear?—who shall smile on thee, and listen to thy words of mirth and joy? The moonbeams have descended to thy garments, and are stooping curiously among the sable folds. Oh, what sad tales they learn! Thy mother's voice is hushed in the

silent tomb; and thy father—where is he? Alas! poor child, the cold waves murmur sadly his lullaby.

But, hush! sad voice—be still, sad tear; thy Heavenly Father yet remains. No quiet tomb, no cold waters can divide thee from Him; and amid hard struggles, bitter tears and sighs, with which thy path will yet be strewn, He will be there to protect and guide thee with His arm; and though contempt and scorn may meet and bend thee, sweet rose, and wither thee with their crushing blast, thy Father will not spurn thee, even governess though thou art!

Yes, Millicent Thornville, the weeping orphan, was a governess; and, what rendered her lot still worse, she had not been brought up to fulfil that cold and arduous, that unloved and unrespected, post. An elegant, refined home—loving, indulgent parents—servants, to whom a look from her was law — luxuries and comforts strewn around her—these had been the portion of the only

child; but a sudden cloud burst heavily over her path, and extinguished the sunshine of her early days.

Mr. and Mrs. Thornville were first cousins; they had few relations, and lived for each other and their Millicent. Amiable, kind-hearted people, their chief delight was in contributing to the comfort and happiness of those around them; and, in return, they gained the love and respect of their neighbours. Their life was blissful as life could be—cares they had none; and in Heatherton Manor, their cheerful home, sorrow and discontent were alike unknown; they were "happy past the common lot," and "*all who knew envied, yet in envy loved. Can fancy form more finished happiness?*"

But no happiness is lasting—nothing is unfading—nothing is unchangeably bright—but Heaven; and that Millicent Thornville was soon to feel.

It was her eighteenth birthday. She was luxuriating in the height of youth, beauty, and

love. It was a summer's day of no ordinary brilliancy; sunshine and zephyrs ushered it in,. and in moonlight and calm it died away, sealed by the breath of peace. A party of friends had celebrated with Millicent the anniversary of her natal day; a long, winding river separated their home from hers; and, late on that summer's night, Mr. Thornville, accompanied by his servants, rowed them up the stream, and left his guests safe at their paternal mansion; but, alas! on his return, in passing the turbulent waters of a mill, the frail bark upset; the domestics were saved, one alone perished—that one was Mr. Thornville!

His Millicent had long retired to rest; Mrs. Thornville alone awaited the return of the absent one, but he returned not; the hours came and went, to come no more—still her husband delayed; at length, after long and anxious waiting, the dreadful news arrives:

'Untold, she saw it in her servant's eye;
She felt it seen (her heart was apt to feel):
And, drown'd without the furious waters' aid,
In suffocating sorrows shares his tomb.'

Yes, Mrs. Thornville sank under the terrible shock; and Millicent—what was her fate? A sad, unforeseen one! Misfortune, it is said, never comes alone. This proved true in her case; after her parent's death, the greatest affliction a child can ever know, her nearest relative, who ought to have come forward to comfort and protect her, appeared to contest the validity of the will, in which Mr. Thornville's grandfather had made him and his children heirs to the Manor; Sir James Heatherton's lawyers pleaded so successfully, that in less than six months after her bereavement, Millicent was both orphaned and disinherited of her lovely home, where everything was endeared to her by a thousand fond, though melancholy, recollections. Sir James Heatherton, now owner of the Manor, offered Millicent a home under the roof which had, till then, been her own. She shrank from receiving favours from those who every one believed had acted dishonourably towards the orphan; she could not bear to live on suffer-

ance in the house that was, she felt convinced, in spite of lawyers' arguments, still her rightful inheritance; she determined what course to pursue, and taking with her her mother's jewels, all the property that remained to her, the poor girl left her splendid home for the humble cottage of an old and faithful servant, who would fain have had her young lady share her humble affluence, but this Millicent refused kindly but firmly, and, making known to no one but the old nurse, Mrs. Lucas, and the village clergyman, her intention of entering upon that situation, the idea of which, in her happier days, would have appalled her, namely, that of a governess; she succeeded immediately, from Mr. Mortimer's high recommendations, in obtaining employment in a family with which he was slightly acquainted; and, after a few preparations, the lonely orphan proceeded, sadly, and with a heart weighed down with sorrow, to fulfil the lot assigned her.

It was one of the gloomiest days of that

dismal month, February, when Millicent took her place in the stage-coach, which was to convey her to the railway station; it was the first time she had ever travelled alone in a public conveyance, and she shrank timidly into a corner, her face concealed by her thick crape veil. For some miles her sole companions were a clergyman and a little girl, who both seemed very much interested, the one with his book and the other with her doll, though every now and then the father closed the volume to make some observation to the child about the country; the little girl looked very pleased when he spoke, and immediately laid down her doll to attend to him. At a large mansion on the road the coachman stopped his horses, and an addition to their party came in—a good-natured, but decidedly vulgar-looking young man, wrapped in a plaid, and adorned with a superabundant profusion of rings, watch-chain, charms and seals, which are so attractive to the "Young England" of the present day. The clergyman looked up

from his book at an exclamation of surprise from the little girl, when the addition—he could scarcely be called an acquisition—to the party, entered.

"'Pon my word, Mr. Seymour," he exclaimed, shaking the clergyman heartily by the hand, "who would have thought of seeing you here! Well, Mary, what are you doing in this part of the world, eh?" and he patted her cheek familiarly—a piece of friendship the little lady seemed not at all to approve, for she drew nearer her father, to shield her from her friend, who she evidently did not like. She was a lovely child, about five years old, with bright flaxen curls, large dark blue eyes, and an expression so innocent and pure, it seemed quite angelic; and Millicent thought, as she laid her tiny hand confidingly on her father's arm, and looked up in his face with an expression of confidence in his protection, she had never seen anything so beautiful.

"I see, Mary, we are not better friends

than before," continued their companion; "why won't you like me, eh?"

"Mary is a quiet little woman, Mr. Robertson," said Mr. Seymour, stroking her little hand gently; "we must not expect her yet to be very intimate with any one out of our own circle; but how are you all at home? Mary and I have been paying rather a long visit at Ansted, with my sister-in-law, so we have not heard much of the home news."

Now it so happened that the family to whom Millicent was engaged was named Robertson, but as it is an ordinary name, she did not immèdiately connect her *vis-à-vis* with the Robertsons of Staplehurst Park, nor would she, perhaps, have done so, but for his answer, and the subsequent conversation, to which she listened attentively.

"Oh! they are all very well at Staplehurst Park, I believe; at least they were on Saturday, when I heard from them. I have been staying some time at the Firs—old Smith's place; you know old Smith, Mr. Seymour—a

capital fellow!—keeps the first horses in the country—splendid hunters—the governor's terribly jealous of Smith's hunters, terribly jealous—my mother always tries to run them down, because she's afraid the governor intends to buy one as good; but he'll not buy one, not he!—he's too fond of his money—he nearly rowed my life out, because I spent my last quarter's allowance before the next was due; and he found out I was obliged to borrow from my sister Kate."

"I don't consider your father at all fond of money," said Mr. Seymour, gravely; "the village charities can testify to that; I respect him for his kind-heartedness and generosity."

"Oh! as to kind-heartedness, my father's the best tempered man alive, only he's terribly fidgetty about our being extravagant, as he calls it; he expects we shall all ruin him, I believe."

Mr. Seymour's benevolent countenance was shaded by an expression of sadness, as he shut the window to keep away the snow, which was

beginning to fall, from his little Mary, and drew the child closer to him.

Mr. Robertson, junior, threw out his legs, drew up his collar, and checked himself in an incipient whistle.

"I say, Mr. Seymour," he began, "my mother's fidgetting herself to death, just now, about a new governess she expects, I believe, some day this week. I would not be her for something; poor Mademoiselle got turned off because the old lady thought she was fascinating, and usurped too much of the conversation. I don't wonder at it, for Kate's so grand, and Clara too stupid, to suit our general run of visitors."

Here Mr. Seymour tried to draw his attention to the country, to politics, to anything, in short, but his present conversation, but to no purpose—Mr. Robertson was not to be checked, and he went on—

"You remember our last poor victim—Miss Ellerton—an uncommon pretty girl she was, and very clever, too. The governor said there

was no one like her for keeping the children in order, and she made capital tea; but Clara thought she was too pretty, and my mother said she dressed too much, and was dreadfully proud. My father wanted her to stay, but the old lady would have her own way; so, off she was sent—a terrible shame! But the best is, she has married some Colonel or other my mother wanted amazingly for Kate! My mother has a notion in her head, that governesses are no better than servants, and that they ought to dress like Quakers, and be as cringing as dressmakers, and then she calls them excellent young women! I say, it is a great shame; but the thing is, you see, our family is quite a new one, though the girls try to make out we are descended from a Sir Hugo de Courcy, who came over with the Conqueror—but I tell 'em it is no such thing—our grandfather was only honest John Robertson, who owned the great mills at Stocklee. Oh! what a passion the girls do get in, to be sure!—and then, if the governess happens to be of some

old family, and sports her crest, she gets worried on all sides."

Mr. Seymour here interrupted Mr. Robertson, and told him gently, and with all kindness, how wrong it was to expose the faults of his parents and sisters, more especially in a public conveyance. "You must excuse me being so unceremonious with you," he continued; "but, my dear friend, we have known each other so long, that you will, I am sure, pardon me, for it is only my friendship for you which induces me to speak thus plainly."

Poor Millicent wondered how Mr. Seymour could profess friendship for a person she considered so familiar, and all he had said made her feel more wretched; but, in her sorrow, she tried to console herself with the idea that she might hope for a friend in Mr. Seymour; and she already loved the little Mary, who had fallen asleep in her father's arms, looking so peaceful and calm, that Millicent, as she gazed on her, envied her ignorance of the earthly sorrows that pressed her with such

an iron hand. She was thinking this, when Mr. Robertson, after a moment's pause, in which he really looked serious, suddenly slapped Mr. Seymour's hand, and said, warmly, "I never in my life saw any one like you, Sir; it's impossible to get angry with you for two minutes together. If you were to lecture me from morning till night, I believe I should like you all the better for it afterwards. If ever I take a serious dodge, it will be to please you—every one likes you. I'm not flattering, but, upon my word, there are the girls—why, they are always saying, 'I won't do this, Mr. Seymour will not like it.' Kate gave up her Sunday rides, because you said it was wrong; and it was only your sermon last Christmas year that made the governor have prayers. But, really, here we are! Mr. Seymour, won't you wake Mary?"

The sudden stopping of the coach made the child start up, when her father lifted her gently out, and then returned to assist Miss Thornville. As Mr. Seymour looked with pity

at the orphan's tearful face and dark dress, he little thought how often he would listen to her sorrows, and be her counsellor and friend in the many trials through which she had to pass.

The coach party were quite separated from Millicent in the train, and, after a solitary journey employed in reflecting on her lonely condition, they arrived at Ledbury, where Mr. Robertson's carriage was waiting. Millicent watched with interest Mr. Seymour and his treasure enter a fly, which was to drive them to Staplehurst Rectory; and then, with a feeling of repugnance, at a *tête-à-tête* drive with Mr. Robertson, junior, she let the footman put her into the carriage. She wrapt herself up in her travelling cloak, and leant back to avoid observation, ready to cry with vexation and annoyance, when she heard Mr. Robertson's voice exclaiming, "The governess, did you say? Well, then, Sam, I'll ride outside; I dare say, she has lots of parcels, and she will like to be all to herself. I say, light my cigar—it's

precious cold! Shut the door, Smith—come, Sam, I'll drive."

A feeling of intense relief passed across Millicent's mind, as the servant closed the door, and she heard the son and heir of the Robertsons mount the coach-box; she never doubted that he was in possession of the reins, by the rapid pace with which the carriage flew along, though in what direction she could not ascertain, as the glimmer of their lamps was the only light on that dark February evening.

At length, they stopped at a lodge, and she heard their driver's voice exclaiming,—"Holloa, Goody—be quick!" Some one came out with a lantern, the gates were slowly opened, and the impatient horses dashed through, while Mr. Robertson again shouted something which Millicent could not hear. In less than two minutes, they passed up an avenue of overhanging trees, whose leafless boughs every now and then beat against the carriage windows, and then stopped before the

house. Mr. Robertson sprang down from the coach-box, threw away the remains of his cigar, and hastened to hand the governess out, not a little curious to see her. As the light shone upon her, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, on finding that she had been his late companion in the stage-coach. He instantly repented not having taken Mr. Seymour's advice, to be more guarded in his conversation in a public conveyance—but the mischief was done. He was too confused to address Miss Thornville; but, as he crossed the hall, he exclaimed to himself, "Poor girl, I'm precious sorry she knows all her miseries beforehand!" Millicent looked after him, as he entered the drawing-room, from whence a buzz of voices issued; but the door closed again immediately, and her attention was turned to the wide oak-floored hall, ornamented with full-length pannelled portraits of stately dames, in hoops and curious head-dresses, and cavaliers in the costume of Charles the First. The picture over the mantelpiece

wore the gown and bands of a divine of olden times, and Millicent thought she traced in the calm, thoughtful expression and high intellectual forehead, a strong likeness to Mr. Seymour. She scarcely imagined these pictures could belong to the Robertsons, whom she had heard described as a new family; whilst the dignified personages, gazing down at her from their tarnished gildings, were evidently the ancestors of some ancient house.

The servants who had been carrying in the luggage did not appear to think it worth while to notice Millicent, and it was not till every parcel was brought in and placed on the table, and the men had duly surveyed them, that the butler came forward and said, "Will you walk this way, Ma'am?" Millicent followed, and soon found herself alone in the schoolroom; the fire had burnt low, and the smouldering ashes emitted only a flickering flame which illumined the hearth-rug, leaving the rest of the room in darkness. The butler,

hastily lighting a candle, left her, without even placing a chair.

As Millicent glanced round the untidy room, strewn about with broken toys and torn books, a sudden loneliness came over her; for the first time, she felt the extreme solitariness of her position, and it was only the thought that Mrs. Robertson would most likely come to her, and that she might be surprised did she find her in tears, that restrained her from a passionate burst of sorrow. Millicent had only waited a very few minutes, when the "old lady," as her son dutifully styled her, entered the room.

Mrs. Robertson was a stout, middle-aged person, very stiff and severe-looking; she advanced slowly towards Millicent, and, giving her finger, she said, in a tone evidently intended to appear dignified, but which was far otherwise, "I presume I address Miss Thornville, the young person I engaged to instruct my dear children?"

Millicent bowed in acquiescence—her heart was too full to speak.

"You look very young," Mrs. Robertson continued; "but that is all the better; I prefer young governesses—they are more cheerful and tractable. I hope you are good-tempered, and fond of children; mine are very affectionate and intelligent; they always will inquire into everything, and like all their questions answered; they are extremely high-spirited, and sometimes they get quite carried away. I think a little mirth does them good, but Mr. Robertson likes quiet; so when he is at home, I shall expect you to amuse them, and engage their attention."

"Are they very young?" Millicent asked, thinking she was expected to say something.

"My Fanny is twelve years old, and Augustus is eight," said Mrs. Robertson; "but you will see them soon—make haste and take off your bonnet, and I will introduce you to your dear charges—they join us in the drawing-room, every evening after dinner; my former

governess seldom accompanied them, but, as you are a stranger, I should prefer you making their acquaintance at once, but you must not expect it to be always so; and, unless by my especial invitation, I hope you understand, you will not be of our party every evening; Mr. Robertson and myself prefer having our children around us, without the restraint which the presence of their instructress imposes;—if you ring the bell, the maid will show you your room."

"Thank you," said Millicent, sadly, though why she thanked Mrs. Robertson, was more than she could have explained—that lady's conversation and manner were like ice to her heart, but she restrained her tears till within the seclusion of her own gloomy chamber; and then, when the maid, without offering to assist her, put down the candle, and left her alone with the moon-beams which had now risen, and were shining in at the window, then it was that the orphan covered her face with her hands and wept, that none were near to love and bless her in her loneliness.

CHAPTER II.

'Within her eye
The heaven of April, with its changing light,
And when it wears the blue of May, is hung,
And on her lip the rich red rose. Her hair
Is like the summer tresses of the trees,
When twilight makes them brown, and on her cheek
Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,
With ever-shifting beauty.'

LONGFELLOW.

A HUM of voices greeted Mrs. Robertson, as she returned to the drawing-room—all her children taking upon themselves to question her about the new governess. Mr. Robertson had learned to be silent on all points in which his wife's judgment and authority were concerned.

"Well, Mamma," said Miss Clara, "is she

pretty? — I hope she is coming down this evening?"

"Pretty! why won't you attend, Clara, when I keep telling you, she is prettier than all you put together!" said Mr. Robertson, junior, mischievously.

"Hush, Tom," exclaimed his mother, while Clara called out—"Tom, you are ruder than ever!"

"You always call me rude when I tell you unpleasant truths," replied Tom; "it is such a familiar tune that it makes no impression."

"Well, but, Tom, I am positive this governess is not pretty," Clara continued; "I peeped at her when you came in, and saw nothing but a pale girl, in black;—I hate black, it is so dismal; I hope she will leave it off soon."

"She shan't before she likes, Miss," said Tom, putting his hands over little Fanny's eyes, who screamed, "Don't, Tom!" and, tumbling against her father's chair, disturbed his slumbers.

"Children, do be quiet," said Miss Robert-

son. "Tom, you make your sisters so wild," exclaimed his mother.

"I say, mother, is your new governess to be cooped up in that gloomy school-room, all alone, on her first evening?" asked Tom.

"I wish and desire, Tom, that you will not talk about Miss Thornville," replied his mother.

"I don't see what harm it does," he answered; "and if you are afraid of my falling in love with her, why, I tell you, mother, I've done it already; but that need not make you uneasy; for it is not to be supposed, Miss Thornville, very pretty and very elegant, descended from people who have owned the same manor from father to son, for generations, would look at Tom Robertson, the miller's grandson!"

"Oh, Tom, how can you!—Tom, I am ashamed of you," pealed from all sides; in the midst of the uproar the door opened, and Millicent entered the room.

The Miss Robertsons were not a little asto-

nished at the governess, who came forward with a timid, but graceful air—her beauty heightened by the blushes which now suffused her countenance. Tom's eulogiums were, indeed, merited; and if he thought her pretty, wrapped up in her thick cloak, he must have found her far more so, now that she had removed her travelling dress, and appeared simply attired in the sable garments, which set off to so much advantage her fair young face, overshadowed by rich brown ringlets.

Tom looked exultingly at his sisters, and then said—"Miss Thornville, won't you come to the fire? I am sure you must be cold."

"Yes, come and warm yourself," chimed in the *pater familias*, good-humouredly, at the same time pushing back his easy chair; "I am very glad you are come; the children run wild without a governess—I get no nap now of an evening."

"Miss Thornville," said Mrs. Robertson, frowning at her husband, and coming forward so as to prevent all possibility of her governess

accepting Mr. Robertson's invitation to approach the fire—"Miss Thornville, these are your pupils—Augustus and Fanny, come and speak to your governess—children, do you hear?"

Millicent looked round to see who Mrs. Robertson was addressing; for "children" did not at all apply to the two young ladies seated at the opposite side of the room, one of whom was staring rudely at her, when suddenly, at a second admonition from their mother, a handsome curly-headed little boy issued from beneath the sofa, and Miss Fanny made her appearance from behind her father's chair.

"Foolish children," said Mrs. Robertson, laughing; "did I not tell you there was nothing to be afraid of in Miss Thornville? Augustus, my dear, you look like a wild child! This is my little boy—he is just eight."

"Old enough to be better," remarked his father.

"My dear John!" said Mrs. Robertson, sharply; "and this is Fanny—she was twelve

in December—Fanny, if you romp so, I shall be obliged to send you to bed."

Fanny looked as if she knew her mother did not mean what she said, and the next minute she was swinging on the piano stool.

Augustus looked at Millicent for a few minutes; and Mrs. Robertson, thinking she had done her duty to the governess, left her to her own devices, and returned to the sofa; presently the child said—

"I mean to like you, Miss Thornville, and will you tell me a story, if I am good?"

"Yes, dear," replied Millicent, smoothing his tangled hair; "what will you like to hear?"

"About naughty boys," replied Augustus, coming closer to Millicent, who had quietly seated herself, and twining one of her long ringlets round his finger.

"I don't know any about naughty boys," said Millicent, gently disengaging her curl. "Good children are much nicer to talk of."

"Oh, no, they are not," continued Augustus,

again pulling her curl; "I like Topsy, in 'Uncle Tom'—it's such fun!"

"But do you not like Eva better? and you know Topsy tried to be good at last."

"I know a girl just like Eva," Augustus said, sitting down on a stool at Millicent's feet; "it is Mary Seymour—Mr. Seymour is our clergyman—and Mary has hair just like Eva's—what pretty hair you've got, Miss Thornville!—I wish sisters would have curls——"

"Hush, dear!" interrupted Millicent, softly; "shall I tell you the history of a white rabbit?"

"Oh yes, do please begin!"

"Well, then, listen attentively. 'There was once a little boy—'"

"Master Augustus, will you please to come to bed?" said an old woman, who had opened the door, unheard.

"Oh, nurse, no—I can't, nurse!" whimpered the little boy.

Just at that moment, Fanny's swinging

suddenly terminated in the downfall of both herself and the piano stool, which last knocked violently against the piano. Miss Fanny, though unhurt, thought fit to assist Augustus in his crying; while Miss Robertson and Millicent both rushed forward—the one to see after the state of her piano, and the other to inquire if her pupil were hurt. The result of Fanny's fall was, that, instead of Augustus going to bed alone, Miss Fanny, at the earnest entreaties of both her father and sisters, accompanied him. After the *fracas* with the children, Millicent sat for a few minutes in silence, and then had leisure to observe the two Miss Robertsons.

Kate, the elder, the only one of the family, except Augustus, who did not show in look and manner their plebeian origin, was a stylish, handsome girl. She was dressed fashionably, but with no display or finery; her splendid black hair, braided down her face, and coiled in large plaits round her head, gave a classical expression to her countenance; she had fine

dark eyes, and a mouth as proud, though by no means so sweet, as Millicent's; her complexion was dark, with a high colour; she had a refined voice, and perfect ease of manner; and, though only two-and-twenty, she looked considerably Millicent's senior. A first-rate education at a fashionable school, and associating with girls far above her own rank of life, had made her dissatisfied with the society of home; and, knowing who Millicent was, Kate hailed her coming into the family with pleasure, thinking that she would at length find some one with tastes congenial to her own. Contrary to girls in her sphere, Kate Robertson did not look to riches only for friendship, but the charm and attraction to her was refinement and cultivation of mind; and this it was, perhaps, that made her evince a contempt for her mother and sister, at once unbecoming and unchristian. She was proud, but not conceited — conscious of her own attractions, without being vain — generous, open-hearted, and affectionate—but disdainful

and haughty in her manner towards those she despised; in short, Kate Robertson merely required the guiding influence of one she could both love and respect, to correct the faults of which she was almost unconscious.

Her sister Clara is described in a few words; quite unlike her sister, she was thin and pale, with expressionless features, and a languid air; having always had delicate health, Mrs. Robertson preferred her education being carried on at home, instead of sending her to school—in consequence she had been much indulged, and this added to her natural disposition, which was unaimable and selfish, made her disliked out of their family circle. Mr. Seymour, however, pitied her, and used his influence to counteract these faults, for their excellent pastor saw in the neglected girl, a soul to save, and he laboured hard to plant the love of God in her heart, that thus a pathway might be made for those virtues, which would change dislike into love.

While Millicent was sitting unnoticed, she became unavoidably the hearer of a little dialogue carried on between the two sisters, in rather a loud whisper—

"I am sure I don't want her here," replied Clara, in answer to something Kate said in a low tone.

"How can you be so unkind?" replied Kate; "you do not practise Mr. Seymour's lessons on amiability."

"Nor you either," retorted Clara.

"They were not given to me," replied her sister.

"Well," said Clara, crossly, "but there is no room here."

Kate made no reply, but cast a scornful look at her sister, and then drawing a chair between them, said in the courteous tone she knew so well how to assume, "I am sure you must be cold, there, Miss Thornville; do come to the table; perhaps, you would like to look at some engravings?"

Millicent immediately accepted Kate's in-

vitation, and they were soon busily engaged in turning over a valuable collection of foreign prints Miss Robertson had recently received from Italy. Kate arranged the lamp so as to throw a good light on them, and seemed determined to make herself agreeable and friendly to Millicent.

"Have you ever been in Florence?" she asked; "these engravings are taken principally from the Florentine Gallery."

"I know the originals well," replied Millicent; "they are strikingly beautiful."

"I envy you," exclaimed Kate; "I have never been further on the continent than Paris; for me, the pleasures of travelling are yet to come."

"It is, indeed, a great pleasure," said Millicent, becoming animated; "the lovely scenery, the treasures of art to be met with in almost every city, especially in Italy; the study of men and manners, the total change of life—all enlarge the mind, and so increase our sources of happiness."

"They must, indeed," said Kate; "but to enjoy travelling thoroughly, the language of the people should be first acquired."

"Modern languages are becoming generally studied," replied Millicent; "I wonder why German was so little taught formerly, it is such a noble language."

"Are you acquainted with it?" asked Kate.

"Yes, perfectly," was the reply. "I had a German governess for some years; and, besides, I have resided several months in the country, when I scarcely spoke a word of English."

"If you have no objection," said Kate, "and would give me a lesson now and then, I should think it so very kind. I have never yet studied German; I think at school it is more usual to teach Italian, and since I have been at home I have never had an opportunity of learning it. I will endeavour not to be troublesome, and hope you will accede to my request; it would be so pleasant to study together during the long evenings."

"I should enjoy it extremely," replied Milli-

cent; "I have plenty of books, and, if you like, we can begin to-morrow."

"That will be delightful!" exclaimed Kate, her face brightening. "I have had no one to study with me since I left school; my sister's tastes and mine are perfectly different."

Their conversation was interrupted by Mr. Robertson, saying, suddenly, "I wonder, Kate, when the young Lord will come back to the Chase?"

"I scarcely think he could return before next week, Papa," replied Kate, turning to her father, while Millicent employed herself in looking at the engravings; "the funeral only took place on Monday, and he must have much to arrange."

"Perhaps," continued Mr. Robertson, "he will not come back to Horton at all; his uncle's estates will be his home now, I suppose."

"No, you are mistaken, Papa," replied Kate; "I learnt in a letter from Agnes Manners, this morning, that her Papa, who is one of the executors, told her Lord Fortescue intends to

continue at Horton Chase, at least for the present; I imagine he will only be too glad to return to his old home; Ashburton Hall and the neighbourhood must be terribly dull, judging from Agnes' description."

"Lord Fortescue is a very odd young man," observed Mr. Robertson, musingly.

"Do you think so, Papa?" said Kate. "Mr. Seymour says he is very superior in every way, extremely good and charitable, but the peculiar manner in which he was brought up may make him rather reserved."

"Mr. Seymour always makes his favourites out rather too perfect," remarked her mother.

"I do not at all agree with you, Mamma," exclaimed Kate, haughtily. "I have never heard Mr. Seymour deviate in the least from the truth, and I always find 'his favourites' persons it would be an honour to resemble."

"Kate's becoming pious all at once," said her brother, who had been the greater part of the evening fast asleep, with his legs dangling over the arm of the chair.

"No," said Clara, who had not spoken once since Kate's reproving look; "the fact is she has fallen in love with this paragon of goodness."

"How vulgar you are," exclaimed Kate, contemptuously.

"Never mind her, Katie," said her father in a good-tempered tone; "I should think the Horton people will be delighted to have their young Lord settled among them again."

"I hope he will care for their interests," replied Katie.

"He will, if he resembles his mother. What a benefactress they had in poor Mrs. Hayward! She was the sweetest creature imaginable—it was a pleasure to speak to her. I cannot think how any man could have been such a brute as to treat her ill."

"Poor thing!" said Kate; "I often hear Mrs. Seymour speak of her with the greatest satisfaction; and Mrs. Blake, at the Chase, never mentions her without shedding tears. Her memory must be very dear to her son."

"I suppose Lord Fortescue will call on us, when he returns," interrupted Clara.

"I do not think he will be in a hurry," Kate replied.

"Why not?" asked her mother.

Kate did not answer, but began talking again to Millicent.

Mrs. Robertson looked extremely annoyed, not because Kate did not answer—to that she was quite accustomed—but she was vexed that Miss Thornville should receive so much attention; she expected, also, that Millicent would have offered to leave the drawing-room with the children, and she was just concocting something severe, not for her daughter, for she stood—as did every one in the house—too much in awe of Kate, of whom she was, besides, very proud, ever to think of reproving her,—but for the poor, unoffending governess. Kate seemed, however, to anticipate what was coming—for, by long study of her mother's countenance, Kate always knew when she was going to say something disagreeable—and,

putting away her work, which was lying on the table, she said, rather loudly, "If you are as tired, Miss Thornville, after a long journey, as I am without one, you will perhaps follow my example of going to bed."

"I shall gladly do so," replied Millicent, "for I am really very fatigued."

Kate rose, rang the bell for the tea things—which had come in during their conversation—to be removed, asked Tom to light two candles, and then went the round of 'good nights,' very coldly, to every one but her father, over whose grey hair she fondly passed her hand, as he said, "God bless you, my Katie!"

Mr. Robertson shook hands kindly with Millicent, saying, "I hope you will sleep well. Mamma, is there a fire in Miss Thornville's room? It has not been used for so long, it might be damp."

"I have seen to that," said Kate, without waiting for her mother's reply; "and, if Sarah has done as she was desired, there has been a fire there for some hours. Are you ready,

Miss Thornville?"—and, taking the candle from her brother, she opened the door. Tom squeezed Millicent's fingers painfully, as he wished her 'Good night,' which caused a moment's delay. Kate again said, "Miss Thornville, are you ready?"—frowned at Tom, and, waiting for Millicent to go first, closed the door hastily.

The servant who showed Millicent her room, had taken her up a back flight of stairs, leading directly from the school-room; but Kate conducted her a different way, by the broad oak staircase, and down a wide passage. At the end was a diamond-paned window, at which the moonbeams were streaming in; Kate paused a moment, and then said, "This is my favourite window—you can see all over the grounds from here. How the moon sparkles on the pond! I had no idea it would prove such a lovely night."

"Nor I," replied Millicent; "it was perfectly dark when I first arrived."

"Can't you see the spire of the church in

the distance?" asked Kate—"there, Miss Thornville, directly to the right."

"I fancy there is a dim outline," replied Millicent.

Kate leant her elbow on the window-ledge, and fixed her eyes, for some moments, on the distance. Millicent looked out, too, in silence, till suddenly Kate started up with a deep sigh, and a pensive expression stole over her countenance—"Miss Thornville," she exclaimed, "it is very thoughtless to keep you standing here in the cold, but I always pause at this window as I go up to bed. I like, on moonlight nights, to take a last look at great, glorious nature before I sleep, and, at this point, the view is the loveliest."

Millicent looked at her companion, and saw with surprise that her eyes were filled with tears.

Miss Robertson, noticing Millicent's expression, said, "Shall we come?—star-gazing, you think, is not going to bed."

Millicent smiled an assent, and followed

Kate through a green-baize door, opening directly on a back landing, and the staircase up which Millicent had been first conducted. Kate cast a look of dissatisfaction round Millicent's room, who fancied she heard her murmur—"Disgraceful! but this *shall* be altered."

Certainly, Kate was not wrong, if she meant the term 'disgraceful' to apply to Millicent's room, which was certainly very miserable. It was situated at the corner of the house, and, consequently, exposed on two sides to the cold winds—and, as if this were not enough, the door did not fit, and let in a most uncomfortable draught. Mrs. Robertson evidently did not think curtains at all necessary to the little iron bedstead, and the drapery to the single window was of the commonest white dimity; the rest of the furniture was extremely scanty, and of the humblest description, and the whole room was entirely destitute of comfort.

Millicent's luggage, which occupied the principal space in the small chamber, still

remained uncorded and in the wrappers, just as it had been carried up. Millicent knelt down, and commenced silently endeavouring to unloose the thick knots with her slender fingers. Kate rang the bell violently, and stirred the fire together, which was very low. "Sarah," she said, in an angry tone, to the maid who answered the summons, "uncord Miss Thornville's boxes directly, and remove the wrappers. It was excessively lazy and careless of you, not to do so before! I thought I desired you to keep up a good fire," Kate resumed, when the boxes had been freed from their covers.

"There was a very good one, Miss, a quarter of an hour ago," replied Sarah, timidly.

"Then, pray, make a good one now," said Kate.

Sarah commenced putting the coals together. Kate placed her small foot on the side of the fender, and rested her elbow on the mantelpiece, whilst Millicent busied herself in un-

packing some of her things. When Sarah had arranged the fire, and left the room, Kate said, turning to Millicent—

"I hope you will find her attentive—she is entirely the school-room maid, and it is her business to wait upon you—pray ask for anything you may require."

"Thank you," replied Millicent; and then, after a pause, she said—"Miss Robertson, I think I travelled with your clergyman to-day in the stage-coach from Heatherton to Red-Cross."

"With Mr. Seymour?" exclaimed Kate; "did you like him?"

"I cannot tell," replied Millicent; "he did not speak to me; but, judging from his conversation with your brother, he must be very good and amiable."

"He is, indeed, good," said Kate; "I do not think there is any one better in the world."

"His little girl is very lovely," Millicent said; "he appeared so fond of her."

"Little Mary is all he has to love," replied Kate.

"Is Mrs. Seymour dead?" asked Millicent.

"Yes; they had only been married two years when she died; I was from home then, but I believe Mr. Seymour was almost broken-hearted, though he bore his grief beautifully. His mother lives with him now; she is very old, and scarcely ever goes out, but I often visit her—she is a charming old lady."

"I suppose Mr. Seymour is a great favourite with his parishioners?" said Millicent.

"Indeed he is—they cannot help liking him," replied Kate. "The village is quite changed since he has had the care of the parish; the people are so much improved in every way—that is the universal opinion—though, of course, I cannot recollect much about the state of Staplehurst before his time; besides, I was constantly at school."

"Has Mr. Seymour been here very long?" asked Millicent.

"Ten years," replied Kate; "that is to

say, he has been our rector ten years; he was six and twenty when he succeeded to the living—but he has always lived at Staplehurst —he was born in this house."

"Indeed!" said Millicent, a little surprised.

"This is the Seymour's property," said Kate; "Papa only has a forty years' lease. Colonel Seymour, the present owner, and our rector's uncle, resides in Italy; he was a man of extravagant habits, and obliged to let his estate. At his death, the property goes to Mr. Seymour's elder brother, an officer in the Guards, with the exception, of course, of the Rectory, which has always belonged to a younger son since the reign of Elizabeth. Mr. Seymour's father was the former rector."

"When I came in, I noticed a portrait over the hall fireplace—is that one of the Seymours —I fancied I traced a likeness to your rector?" said Millicent.

"That is Doctor Everard Seymour, who was *chassé* from Staplehurst during the Protectorate; he took refuge in Holland, and his

daughter was one of the ladies of honour to Mary of Orange."

"How very interesting," said Millicent; "is the present owner of Staplehurst old?"

"About sixty, I believe," replied Kate; "I do not suppose he will live to regain possession of Staplehurst. Papa talks of building a place at Westworth, a village not very far from here; it is very beautifully situated, and within a short drive of this. We were all born here, and should not like to leave the neighbourhood—but we have seventeen years more of the lease, yet."

"That is a long time to look forward," said Millicent.

"Yes, it is," said Kate, thoughtfully; "but, Miss Thornville, I must not keep you up any longer; I hope you will sleep well—I am sorry your room is so uncomfortable, it is much too small for you—I will have another arranged to-morrow; when I found this had been chosen for you, I spoke about it, but it was too late to alter it."

Kate looked much annoyed, but Millicent did not say, "Never mind," for she did mind very much being put into such a wretched room.

"Good night, Miss Thornville," continued Kate, shaking hands, warmly. "I hope, when we know each other, we shall be great friends."

"I am sure we shall—good night, Miss Robertson," said Millicent, closing the door after Kate, not a little pleased with her kindness; and Kate was equally pleased with Millicent—she was charmed with her soft, lady-like manners, and ease of conversation—and she felt what a comfort a companion, whose tastes agreed with her own, would be; but Kate was thoroughly annoyed with Mrs. Robertson, in persisting in giving her the same bed-room she had so often objected to before as unfit for any lady. Kate determined it should be altered—she had been the champion of all the governesses who had come and gone from Staplehurst, though she had never yet

found one whose tastes assimilated with her own, but she had always behaved to them with the greatest consideration and kindness. But Kate was prepared to treat Millicent quite differently—a lady placed by misfortune in her position, demanded more than consideration—more than kindness; Kate felt that she required friendship and sympathy, and this she determined, in spite of opposition, to give her.

I will not attempt to describe Millicent Thornville's thoughts that night, except that Kate was often present, and her first prayer at Staplehurst was for her new friend.

CHAPTER III.

'My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch—even then, life's journey just begun?
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.'

COWPER.

THE grey morning was dawning, when Millicent awoke from a sweet dream of home; but, alas! for her, it was but a dream! Heatherton was many miles distant, and if near, it would have been still the same for Millicent, for it was tenanted by strangers, and no longer the property of her, who appeared to all just-minded persons the rightful owner. Millicent, however, did not long indulge in vain regrets, but repeating, as had been her custom from childhood on rising, the 'Morning Hymn,' she drew aside her curtains and looked out of

the window, but the prospect was very different to the one her mind had pictured—no church spire stood forth against the grey morning—no elms waved before her casement—no frost-covered pond or snowy grass met her expectant eye; the governess's room was over the servants' offices, and the view, thought sufficient for the refined and elegant girl, was the stable yard, and the tops of the trees beyond; that was all her eyes had to rest on, except a horse under the hands of a groom. She let her blind down again with a sigh, and after the sigh came a tear, and then an earnest supplication for help to bear with patience the trials she already foresaw would strew her pathway. As Millicent surveyed her room, so comfortless and commonly furnished, she could not think why, in this large and beautiful house, such an apartment had been singled out for her use—her own governess had been mistress of a pleasant suite of rooms, and was always treated with kindness and respect by her parents; and poor Millicent could not avoid

contrasting her mother's fascinating, winning kindness, with Mrs. Robertson's overbearing, consequential manner; but she had yet more of Mrs. Robertson to see, and that under a worse aspect than on the preceding evening. Millicent paused at Kate's favourite window, in going down; the moonlight night had been succeeded by a bright frosty morning, and the first objects that met her view, were not only the village church, crowned with the slanting sunbeams, but the chimneys of the little rectory nestling under its shadow, and the winding wreaths of grey smoke that rose in vapoury stillness from their midst. The churchyard and rectory-garden joined one part of the park, and the Robertson's had a private gate leading into the former. Millicent would have lingered longer, but hearing Mrs. Robertson's voice, she hastened down to receive her instructions for the morning studies; at the foot of the principal staircase, she was met by that lady, who scarcely condesending the usual morning courtesies, said, "Miss Thornville, I

am surprised Sarah did not show you the schoolroom stairs, which my former governesses used on every occasion; visitors do not generally like to meet a stranger about the house, and passing them would place you in an embarassing position."

Millicent stared at Mrs. Robertson in surprise, scarcely understanding what she meant; however, before she could make any answer, Mrs. Robertson resumed, "I hope you have industrious habits; the dear children have gone rather back, since Miss Ellerton left, and I should like them to get on nicely; Augustus is very quick, but you must not cross his temper—he is rather excitable, though very good-hearted."

"He appears a nice little fellow," Millicent replied; "perhaps you will be kind enough to tell me how their time is to be divided?"

Mrs. Robertson told her the schoolroom hours, and then displayed her ignorance by the way in which she confused their studies, till Millicent in kindness helped her through the list, and then sought her pupils.

She found Fanny, nothing daunted by her last night's overthrow, again at her favourite occupation of swinging on the piano stool, whilst Augustus had converted the poker into a horse, which he was urging forward with great speed, to the extreme detriment of an excessively gaudy new carpet, which had only lately graced the schoolroom.

"My dear child," said Millicent, who could scarcely refrain from laughing, "do put your horse back in his stable."

"Oh, Miss Thornville, the story you promised me!" shouted Augustus.

"I never tell them to little boys who ride on pokers, or little girls who swing on piano-stools," replied their governess.

Augustus immediately consigned the poker to the fender, calling—"Come, Fanny, listen to the story."

"I don't want to hear it," she pouted.

"I am not going to tell one now," said Millicent;—"come, get me your books, and let me hear how nicely you can do your lessons."

By the time the children chose to understand she was really in earnest, and had found in a cupboard—full of toys, dolls, and books, all heaped together, in terrible confusion—the hymn-books that were to commence their dreaded morning studies, the breakfast-bell sounded; and, before Millicent discovered she was expected to join the family with her pupils, the children had rushed off into the dining-room. Millicent quickly followed, and found herself entering with the servants, who scarcely waited for her to pass in to prayers before them. Their want of respect annoyed Millicent, extremely—tears of vexation filled her eyes, and she took a vacant chair between the children, without noticing that no one wished her good morning, or that Kate and Tom were not down: She tried to give her undivided attention to the prayers, but in vain—the thought would rise to her mind of the two humbling circumstances which already, that morning, had given her young heart pain—first being told to go up the back stairs—she,

the daughter of a proud family!—and then walking into the room with the servants, who evidently thought her little or no better than themselves! No wonder that the former heiress of Heatherton felt ready to repine at her hard lot. But pause, Millicent, ere you murmur. Your path beset with cares and vexations now, may one day brighten into smiles—no well-sustained sorrow but has its reward. 'Bear in mind, as much as possible, that spring and summer will return—that the sun is behind a cloud, and will come forth in due time!'—If God cares for the young ravens, surely he cares for thee—a young and fatherless girl! Thoughts, such as these, at length calmed her mind; and had it not been for Fanny, on one side, scratching 'F. Robertson' on the back of her chair with a pin, and Augustus, on the other, pulling hard at a button, which he had almost succeeded in dragging out of the cushion, Millicent would have been enabled to listen to the short prayer which concluded their morning devotions; though that, too,

was interrupted by—first, Kate, in her riding-dress, and then, Tom, in morning *négligé*, coming in.

"Good morning, Miss Thornville," said Kate, after greeting her father, the only member of the family she favoured by her notice. "It is going to be a lovely day. I have been out in the park, trying my new horse, Snowdrop."

"Is it not very cold?" asked Millicent.

"Cold?—that it is," exclaimed Tom, coming round with the wish of shaking hands with Millicent, who, however, seeing his intentions, commenced cutting some bread for Augustus.

"I say," continued Tom, "let me cut the bread—come, turn out, youngster."

"No, I shan't," replied Augustus.

"Won't you?—Well, old fellow, we'll see;" and Tom lifted his little brother from his chair, and took possession of it himself, at the same time claiming the knife and loaf from Millicent's reluctant hands.

Clara burst into a loud laugh, while Augus-

tus began to kick his brother with all his might. Fanny clapped her hands, and Tom called out, "Go it."

"Augustus, don't, there's a good boy—Fanny, for shame!" said poor Millicent, in despair.

"I am surprised, Miss Thornville," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, in high indignation; "if this is your control!—Tom, I insist—Miss Thornville, is Augustus to be turned from his seat, without your interference?"

"Mamma, dear Mamma," said poor Mr. Robertson, in distress; "come, Tom, there's a good fellow!—come, children, come—this is a wretched breakfast-table!"

So thought poor Millicent, who was expected to prevent Tom's rude sallies—to keep order with children who were never taught to obey—and preserve peace, where peace was seldom seen.

"I protest, Miss Kate, you see a letter in the coals," said Tom, resigning his usurped chair, and pulling the feather of Kate's hat,

who was gazing abstractedly into the fire. Kate vouchsafed no other reply than a frown, and untying her hat, and throwing it with her gloves on a side table, she sat down opposite Millicent, who had pacified Augustus, at his mother's request, with a plate of ham.

"I congratulate you on having undertaken the instruction of the two worst-behaved children in the county," Kate said, looking at Mrs. Robertson, as much as to say, "You can't deny it."

"How severe you are, Kate," said Clara. "When we were children, I dare say we were just as wild."

"I don't doubt you made a merit of being so," Kate answered. "Miss Thornville, do let the children take care of themselves—you have no breakfast. Tom, send me a wing of that chicken."

"No, Miss, you don't deserve it—a chicken has only two wings, one is already gone, and the other is for Miss Thornville."

"For once in my life, I am not angry with

you; it was for Miss Thornville I wanted it," replied Kate; then, turning to Mr. Robertson, she said, "Papa, will you ride with me to Horton to-day?"

"Yes, Katie, to be sure I will."

"I would come, too, only I am going out with the hounds," said Tom.

"You will certainly get your neck broken some day," said Clara, who was very timid.

"So much the better for the family in general," replied Tom; "and as to you, Katie, you will have one less to scold."

"I never scold you unless I am obliged."

"Capital!—first-rate," said Tom; "still, Miss Kate, in spite of your lectures, you are the best of the lot, with one exception,"—and he looked knowingly at Millicent, who happened at that moment to be looking at him. The colour mounted to her cheeks. Tom laughed at her confusion, and then said, "I know why Kate is going to Horton."

"Indeed!" replied Kate.

"Oh, do tell," said Clara.

"No, Miss Inquisitive, I shall not satisfy you; it is too good for listeners,"—and he whispered something to Kate.

"Mamma, do speak to Tom," said Clara, in an angry tone. "Tom, it is very rude of you to whisper. Kate, I am surprised you listen."

Kate tossed her beautiful head, and said aloud, "Tom, you shall not talk in that manner: how can you wonder that I am displeased?"

"Well, Kate, I only said you ——— "

"Hush, Tom!" she exclaimed. "Will you never learn to behave like a gentleman?"

Just at that moment Augustus contrived to upset the contents of his cup into Millicent's lap.

"You should not have sat so close to him, Miss Thornville," said Mrs. Robertson. "Dear me! governesses are always unfortunate."

"People generally try to make them so," said Kate, softly, but still loud enough for her mother to hear. "Miss Thornville, your

breakfast has met with an agreeable finale! —mine is finished, so I will help you with your unfortunate crape. Augustus, I shall give Mary Seymour those pictures I bought for you;" —and Kate sailed out of the room after Millicent, holding up the long folds of her habit.

"There go two uncommon pretty girls, but the governess is the best of the two!" exclaimed Tom.

"Tom, I am surprised you can say such things! If Kate is going to make her a companion, I shall have trouble enough; I thought Kate had more pride," said Mrs. Robertson, red with indignation.

"I think her tastes are much better than those who everlastingly taste bread and butter," he replied, putting the newspaper over Clara's plate, who was still continuing her breakfast; then, getting up, he said, "Good-bye, I'm off. Don't be surprised, father, if you meet me in Horton."

"What are you going there for?" asked Clara—but Tom had gone.

"I am surprised, John," said Mrs. Robertson, "at Tom's behaviour to Miss Thornville; but he will flirt with every governess that comes into the house. My advice is thrown away—you must use your authority."

"Well, well, my dear, I'll see about it," replied her husband, taking up the newspaper and leaving the room. Augustus and Fanny ran out, too, after quietly stealing a handful of sugar.

"Well, Clara," said Mrs. Robertson, when they were alone, "what do you think of our new governess?"

"Just like their set in general—very airish and conceited," replied Clara.

"I'm more annoyed than I choose to express about Kate," said Mrs. Robertson. "I shall never be able to keep Miss Thornville, if this is the way Kate is to behave—it is quite tiresome of her. I wonder what our friends will say, if she makes a companion of the governess?"

"Mamma, why do you not prevent it

I should tell Kate of it, certainly," said Clara.

"My dear Clara, it is foolish of you to talk so; you know well enough that it is useless speaking to Kate."

"There, Mamma—there it is, again; of course, if you don't speak to Kate, you cannot expect her to improve."

"Well, Clara, if you must know, it was only last night I did represent to her how odd her conduct to Miss Thornville was."

"And what did she say, as an excuse?" asked Clara, all curiosity.

"She made no excuses at all, but stormed out at what she called my injustice to my governesses; I never heard anything like the way in which she talked of their being equal to ourselves, and about Miss Thornville's good family, till I could not listen any longer."

"I think Kate does it out of opposition," remarked Clara.

"She is so proud in some things, and lowers herself in others," said her mother.

"She does not profit much from Mr. Seymour's instructions," added Clara.

"Hush, my dear! I cannot have you find fault with your sister," replied Mrs. Robertson "She has so many good qualities; besides she is an elegant, stylish girl, and a great ornament to our family. I wonder what Lord Fortescue will think of her?"

"I don't think Kate will care," said Clara in a mortified tone.

"Nonsense, she will," replied her mother "he is sure to return your Papa's visit, when he comes back to the Chase; we are the only family of any standing, except the Seymours, and he will be glad enough to make our acquaintance. Kate can be very fascinating when she chooses."

"That is as you think, Mamma," said Clara. She could not bear to hear her sister praised, so she left the room in anything but an amiable temper.

While Mrs. Robertson and Clara were holding this conversation by the dining-room

fire, Kate and her father were riding along the hard, frosty road, to Horton, a little hamlet of Staplehurst. They were both quite happy, then. Mr. Robertson was always pleased to be with his beautiful Katie, the only one of the family who did not cross and annoy the worthy man; and Katie's heart was always lighter during a solitary ride with him, for there was nothing, then, to disturb her proud spirit—no contentions or disputes, arising from some unfortunate ill-timed word. Mr. Robertson had a great deal of good common sense and information about the things of every-day life, which many people pass over; and, though his conversations with Kate were never very deep or learned, she generally listened with interest, and never contradicted him; and her father, even if he did not think exactly as Kate did, always tried to agree with her, and thus there seemed a mutual understanding between father and daughter. Kate was extremely glad that Clara's fears kept her from horse exercise, and that, therefore, their *tête à tête* rides were

seldom interrupted—though sometimes Mr. Seymour joined them for a few hours' recreation from his arduous parish duties; and then the kindling of Kate's dark eye, and Mr. Robertson's increased animation of voice, and hearty expressions of pleasure, were sufficient proofs how they both loved and revered their excellent pastor. But, to-day, they rode alone —their rector had been absent for a month, and during that time business had accumulated—he must not now think of taking pleasure—and neither of the equestrians expected to meet him.

"Papa," said Kate, "I have been longing to go to Horton for some weeks, to see the interior of the new church Lord Fortescue is building; and, now he is away, it is a capital opportunity; Mr. Seymour is sure to ask me if I have seen it—the design was his."

"Then, I am sure it is good, Katie—it is in the Gothic style, I suppose?"

"Yes, Papa; Mr. Seymour showed me the plan before he left home—it is quite simple—

I mean there are no crosses, or superfluous ornaments."

"Quite right, Katie—quite right; I hate gaudy churches."

"How dark the clouds are getting! do you foretel a storm, Papa?"

"We shall have it before long, but I expect it will keep off till the afternoon."

"I hope so, too, for Miss Thornville has gone out with the children."

"They will get under shelter, Katie," replied her father; "there is no occasion to be anxious about them."

"What a grand-looking old place this Horton Chase is!" said Kate, as, on turning a corner of Lord Fortescue's park, they obtained a view of the house. "I am obliged to admire it every time I pass; no wonder he does not like to leave it."

"His father and grandfather lived here before him, and it is natural he should feel attached to the place; his mother died here, you know," said Mr. Robertson.

"Yes, Papa, I remember seeing her funeral; I was a little girl then."

"Poor fellow, he has seen a great many troubles, young as he is!—losing both his parents, when he was quite a child, he has led a lonely life since; his grandmother was a poor companion for a boy like him; and, even when at college, he entered very little into society."

"I think he must have been most attached to the late lord," said Kate.

"Aye, and he's gone, too!" replied her father—"So it is; he did not live very long after the old lady; and yet, Lord Fortescue was not a very old man."

"I saw him once, when I was at school—he came to see his niece, Agnes Manners."

"Here we are, Katie," exclaimed Mr. Robertson; "here is the church."

"They have gone on with it a great deal since I was last this way—you will not mind looking over it, Papa—we can get one of the workmen to hold the horses?" asked Kate.

She had dismounted in a moment; and,

while Mr. Robertson was consigning his horse, and Kate's beautiful mare, to the charge of a labourer, Kate tripped lightly over the rubbish, and, entering the church porch, cast an upward glance at the light elegant arches. It was not till her father's voice made her look round, that she perceived, with his elbow resting on the font, a tall, slight young man, in deep mourning; and though she had not seen Lord Fortescue since he was a child, she felt sure it must be he. While her eyes were resting with compassion on his melancholy countenance, he turned suddenly round, looked at her for an instant, and then, coming forward, shook hands with Mr. Robertson, who, turning instantly to Kate, said, in a tone of pride, "My daughter, Lord Fortescue." The young nobleman bowed, and Kate's feathers bowed too, as she spoke with that perfect ease which never forsook her. "We came here, at Mr. Seymour's request, to admire your new church, thinking you were still absent from the Chase."

"The little building has been honoured with

few visitors," he said, with a sad smile; "but I shall be most glad if you will be interested in it, and suggest any improvement."

"When do you expect it to be finished?" asked Kate, as they moved down the aisle.

"I hoped to have had it consecrated in April," he replied; "but the lengthened frosts keep us very much back. I am building it in memory of my mother," he continued, looking mournfully on the ground.

Compassion again beamed in Kate's dark eyes; for she knew well his mother's sad history; and when Lord Fortescue looked up, he met the feeling expression he seemed to expect.

"The design of the church is Mr. Seymour's," he said, rousing himself from his melancholy reverie; "of course, you know him, Miss Robertson?"

"Oh, perfectly," she replied, while a peculiar expression passed over her countenance.

"There are not many like him," said Mr. Robertson: "he is a fine specimen of our

English clergymen. Is he not related to you, my Lord?"

"Yes; my grandfather and Mrs. Seymour were brother and sister."

Mr. Robertson went to ask a question of the head workman, while Kate and Lord Fortescue went on, looking into the pews, going into the chancel, and through the vestry. Lord Fortescue would have liked Kate to mount the belfry for the view, which was very extensive; but the stairs had not yet any railings, and he feared Kate's habit would throw her down.

"It will be a beautiful church," she said, when they again found themselves in the porch.

"I am glad you like it," he replied; "pray come as often as you please; there is great pleasure in watching the progress of a building—at least, I find it so."

There is a sort of free-masonry among young people, and it seemed so with these. They had met each other without restraint; and, after half-an-hour's intercourse, in spite of the dif-

ference in rank, they appeared already at home with each other.

"I am going your way," said Lord Fortescue, "and if you will allow me, I will ride with you."

"We shall be highly honoured," replied Mr. Robertson, good-humouredly, while he saw a third horse being led up and down.

"There is a storm very near at hand," Lord Fortescue said, as he assisted Kate to mount.

"The sky looks beautiful: I am fond of dark clouds," she replied.

"Not of their contents, though, Katie," said her father.

"I do not care much about snow," she replied, as they quickened their horses' pace.

At that moment a fall of snow and hail began to descend heavily.

"We will turn into the park; you must take shelter at the Chase, Mr. Robertson," said the young nobleman; "I shall thank the snow for having sent me visitors."

The storm was too heavy to refuse the invitation, and Kate soon found herself in the hall of the Chase, shaking the snow off her feathers; a large fire burnt on the hearth, and two or three dogs slumbered before it, but a peculiar air of hushed stillness reigned through the house, and the whole aspect of the place looked as if it had not been altered, for at least half a century.

"Come into the library, Miss Robertson," said Lord Fortescue; "a solitary man like me, never uses a drawing-room."

The room in which he led his visitors, was large and wainscoted with oak, plentifully filled with old-fashioned furniture, and round the sides were bookcases, filled with books, which looked as if they had been untouched for many years by any hand, save that of time.

"I suppose you think my family are not fond of alterations," said Lord Fortescue, smiling, as Mr. Robertson glanced round the room.

"No; I was not thinking of that," replied Mr. Robertson. "I was calling to mind stormy parish meeting in this very room, some twenty years ago, when your grandfather and old Mr. Seymour had a quarrel, and were not on speaking terms for a twelvemonth after."

"From the stories I have heard, I imagine Mr. Seymour must have been rather a passionate person."

"A very irritable fellow, indeed; and your grandfather was very hot-headed; I recollect when he was master of the ceremonies at the Stocklee ball, how he fell out with Captain Grey, one of the stewards."

"That is one of my housekeeper's favourite stories," said Lord Fortescue, smiling.

"Mrs. Blake and I are great friends," said Kate; "I made her acquaintance at the Rectory, and then she insisted on my visiting her, and being shown the house."

"Oh! then it is familiar to you?" observed Lord Fortescue.

"Perfectly," replied Kate, laughing. "I have

often enjoyed strawberries and cream in Mrs. Blake's parlour.—But, Papa, the storm has ceased, we must not intrude on Lord Fortescue any longer."

"Oh, pray, do not hurry away, I am delighted that you have done me the honour to visit my solitary abode."

"Thank you, for having sheltered us, but we must really leave now; we have a call at the Seymours to make before luncheon," said Kate.

"We shall hope to see you at Staplehurst, my lord," said Mr. Robertson, as he mounted his horse. Lord Fortescue promised an early visit, and said how pleased he was to have met them. Kate was quite delighted with Lord Fortescue, his manner was so natural and easy, and perfectly free from hauteur, that she felt sure they would find him a pleasant acquaintance; and, when she and her father called at the Rectory, Mr. Seymour spoke in such high terms of him, that Kate's favourable impression was quite confirmed.

Horton Chase, a fine old estate in Gloucestershire, had been, for several centuries, the property of the Heywards, a younger branch of the Fortescue family. The late Lord Fortescue, and his brother, Frank Heyward, the present lord's father, were, for some years, the only representatives of that ancient house. The elder brother never married; but Frank, who was of a roving, wild disposition, returned from one of his wanderings with a young and lovely bride. There appeared a mystery hanging over her; no one could tell who she was, or where he had met her; and her coming among them afforded ample subject for conversation in the neighbourhood. After the first excitement of the marriage was over, and Mrs. Heyward became settled at the Chase, every one around learnt to respect and love their friend and benefactress; but, strange to say, in proportion as the regard of the tenantry and household increased, so Frank Heyward became colder and more indifferent to his sweet and aimable wife. Surprised and grieved, she

used all her charming and winning ways to make him love her as of old, but to no avail; and when, after a time, she saw how little he really cared for her, she became sad and melancholy; and, to add to her discomfort, her husband brought his mother to find her home in his. Though Lady Fortescue was never absolutely unkind in her behaviour to her daughter-in-law, yet her pride and love of control, made Mrs. Heyward still more miserable After two years of loneliness, a son was given her a bright lovely boy, who soon became the darling and solace of her life. Her little Arthur was all in-all to her, but even this pleasure she was not allowed to enjoy undisturbed, for Frank Heyward, who was seldom at home, deputed Lady Fortescue to overlook his child's education; this superintendence, her ladyship converted into a complete surveillance, and interfered in all Mrs. Heyward's simple plans. But the older Arthur grew, the more he became attached to his good and beautiful mother; never was child more tractable and obedient, than when with

her; he watched her every word and look—but, under the control of others, particularly of Lady Fortescue, he was impatient and rebellious. For some years, Mrs. Heyward endured this life of trial, until the increased unkindness of her husband, and his mother's perpetual irritation preyed upon her health; and shortly after Arthur's tenth birthday, a funeral procession wound slow and dark among the hills, and bore Millicent Heyward to her last resting place, in the dark vaults of Staplehurst church, while her gentle spirit was gone home to God. No childish grief was ever more lasting and deep than Arthur Heyward's, which was continued by Lady Fortescue's want of sympathy, and her injudicious treatment after his mother's loss. On his father, this blow appeared to make no lasting impression; at first, when hastily summoned from Paris, where he generally resided, to his wife's funeral, his conscience, if he had any remaining, seemed to reproach him for his neglect of one so good and gentle; and he gave way to many ex-

pressions of remorse. He did not, however, remain long at the Chase, but soon returned to Paris and all its gaieties, where, his career was soon terminated by a short and mysterious illness. After the death of her younger son, Lady Fortescue entirely left the Chase, and went with Arthur to his uncle's estate in Yorkshire; and the young heir was almost forgotten in Horton, as he never visited his property.

At length, when eleven years had passed away, a retinue of servants and horses came to the Chase, and, in a few days, Arthur Heyward arrived with his uncle. Lady Fortescue was dead, and Arthur had come of age—a solemn gathering of the tenantry proclaimed this; shortly afterwards, Lord Fortescue quitted Horton, and his nephew was sole and undisturbed possessor of the ancient mansion, where he had only been located a few weeks, when death again visited the family, and Arthur succeeded to his uncle's title, and became Lord Fortescue.

CHAPTER IV.

'The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love;
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.'

COWPER.

WHILE Mr. Robertson and Kate were so unexpectedly making an agreeable acquaintance with Lord Fortescue, Millicent and her pupils were walking in quite a different direction.—Augustus had undertaken to show the way, and was very proud of doing the honours; Millicent already began to like him, for, though extremely wild and spoilt, he was really a good-hearted, affectionate child; but Fanny appeared a conceited, pert little thing, and

Millicent anticipated she would cause her a great deal of trouble. Between telling Augustus the promised story, and preventing Fanny from sliding on every pond they saw, Millicent found plenty of employment during the walk.

"Oh, thank you, Miss Thornville, for that beautiful story," said Augustus, as the history of William Tell came to an end—"I will never spill tea on your dress any more; and when may I hear another?"

"Very soon, dear; but look, it is beginning to snow; we must make haste—come, Fanny."

"Oh, I am so tired," she replied.

"We shall be home very soon—surely you can walk a little faster."

But Fanny had made up her mind that she would not obey; and she walked so slowly, that the storm had come on heavily when they reached the Rectory, on their way to the park gates. Just then the children saw Mr. Seymour returning from the schools, and ran forward to meet him.

"You must come into the Rectory, till the storm is over. You are not alone, children?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"Oh, no! our new governess, Miss Thornville, is just behind," they replied, running up to the Rectory door. Mr. Seymour, waited for Millicent, whom he recognised immediately as his late travelling companion from Heatherton, and asked her courteously to follow the children—an invitation which Millicent readily accepted.

In Mr. Seymour's drawing-room, they found little Mary, and her grandmamma, a stately old lady, with hair that rivalled the snow-flakes they were watching. Mary ran forward to meet her father, who took her up in his arms and kissed her baby face, with fond affection, as she twined her arms round his neck. Mrs. Seymour came towards Millicent, and shook hands kindly with her, saying, "I do not yet know your name, but I am glad to see you; come and sit by me, my arm-chair is always near the fire; they say old folks are generally cold."

"But warm-hearted," said Mr. Seymour, who had put Mary down to entertain the little Robertsons, and now leant his elbow on his mother's chair. "I ought to introduce Miss Thornville to you, mother —she was my travelling companion from Heatherton."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Seymour; "you had a long journey—I hope you will like this neighbourhood; you must come often to see me —I love young people."

"You are very kind," replied Millicent; "it will, indeed, afford me great pleasure—I have no friend here."

"Poor child," said Mrs. Seymour, kindly; "if you can put up with the company of an old woman like me, I shall often look out for you at the Rectory; I never pay visits, so I expect people to come and see me." Mrs. Seymour said this cheerfully, and Millicent felt that her society would be a great relief to her sometimes, when the school-room duties were over.

"Your little grand-daughter is a sweet child," observed Millicent; "I was very much struck with her, yesterday."

"Mary is a happy little girl," said Mr. Seymour, looking fondly at her—"at least, we try to make her so; the innocence of childhood is very beautiful!—'Except ye become as a little child,'" he said, softly.

"It is sad to see children neglected," said Millicent.

"It is, indeed," he replied; "you, Miss Thornville, have a work to do."

"A difficult one, I fear," said Millicent, "and one to which I am totally unaccustomed."

"I fancied so," he said, kindly; "but you do not work for an earthly master; He has borne all for you, you must bear something for Him —I have just come from a little flock, and I thought it a blessed office to prepare them for the Lord of Paradise."—Mr. Seymour looked at Millicent, as if expecting an answer.

"I feel so strange in my new employment," she said, encouraged by his kind manner;

"and, being an orphan, I have no one to look to."

Her trembling lip, and the sad words she spoke, touched a chord in Mr. Seymour's compassionate heart, and he said, "Have you no one to look to, Miss Thornville?"

She turned her sweet young face up to his, with an earnest expression, as she replied, "Ah, yes, a Friend I can never lose."

"Then, my dear young friend," he said, "you need not be cast down—you know, where help can be found." Just then, little Mary came up to Mrs. Seymour, and, laying her little hand on her lap, said, in a lisping voice, "Grandmama, may I say, how do you do, to that lady?"

"Yes, dear," replied Millicent, "come and speak to me; do you know I have seen you before?"

"Oh! how odd! isn't it, Papa?" said Mary, in a surprised tone.

"Not very, darling," he answered; "we came in the coach with Miss Thornville; yesterday."

"And do you know Aunt Katie?" asked Mary.

"She always calls sister Kate, aunt," said Augustus, by way of explanation.

"Yes, Mary, I know her quite well," replied Millicent.

"And will you come to see me when she does?" asked the little girl.

"Would you like me to come?" said Millicent, stroking her glossy hair.

"Oh, yes, I could love you," she replied; "may I, Papa?"

"Ask Miss Thornville—she will say you may."

Millicent took little Mary on her lap, and kissed her; and as her dark curls mingled with the child's flaxen hair, they made a lovely picture of youth and childhood, love and innocence.

Millicent could have lingered at the Rectory, particularly as her pupils behaved decidedly better there than at home, but the storm cleared, and Mrs. Robertson's

probable anger at their lengthened absence, presented itself disagreeably to her mind; and, after promising Mary another visit, and a kind invitation from both Mr. and Mrs. Seymour, to come as soon as she had leisure, Millicent and the children took their leave.

As Millicent had feared, Mrs. Robertson was extremely annoyed at their remaining out later than the hour she had fixed for their return. "I am surprised, Miss Thornville," she said, "that you kept the children out so much beyond their time."

"Our delay was unavoidable," replied Millicent, colouring with vexation at Mrs. Robertson's reproof.

"Unavoidable, Miss Thornville," she exclaimed.

"We could not return through the storm," said Millicent, quietly.

"You ought to have been home before it began," was Mrs. Robertson's reply.

"That was impossible," replied Millicent,

" and as Mr. Seymour invited the children in, I thought we were very fortunate in being sheltered during the heavy fall of hail."

"You should not have taken the children to the Rectory, without my orders; Mr. Seymour does not like intrusion; as a stranger, I did not expect you would have done so."

"I thought it would have been rude to refuse; besides, the children ran in before I could stop them."

" Oh, of course, it was the children's fault —what governess ever was wrong?"

" Indeed, Mrs. Robertson," began Millicent, her voice trembling.

"Indeed, Miss Thornville, I beg you will not answer me."

Just then, the children, having taken off their walking dress, came down to lessons, and Mrs. Robertson left the room, looking very angry, and saying something about impertinence.

After this little altercation with Millicent, Mrs. Robertson returned to the library; she

thought she had only been doing her duty to her governess in reproving her, and went on working with Clara as if nothing had happened.

"Kate is taking a long ride," said Clara, "I do not think she can enjoy it much, it is so dreadfully cold to-day."

"Kate never minds the cold," replied Mrs. Robertson; "but I cannot have you walk to-day, Clara; I am going to Stocklee, in the close carriage, this afternoon, and you had better come with me—I want to order a common looking-glass for Miss Thornville's room; I was obliged to have one of the large ones put there."

"It is much too good," said Clara; "do you mean her to have fires every night, Mamma?"

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Robertson; "that was Kate's doing, last night."

"Here are Papa and Kate!" exclaimed Clara, who was standing by the window.

"Kate certainly looks very well on horseback," observed Mrs. Robertson, getting up to look at her eldest daughter as she dismounted.

The gardener was waiting to see Mr. Robertson, who went away towards the hot houses, so Kate came in alone.

"Have you had a nice ride?" asked Clara.

"Yes, very," replied Kate, warming her hands by the fire.

"Where were you during the snow storm?" said Mrs. Robertson.

"We took shelter at the Chase, Mamma, for it came on very heavily," replied Kate.

"At the Chase?" repeated Clara; "I suppose you visited your friend, Mrs. Blake?"

Kate did not answer Clara's question; but, turning suddenly round to her Mamma, she said, "Mamma, we must find Miss Thornville another bed-room; it is impossible for her to continue in the one she now occupies."

"She has been complaining, of course, like governesses in general," replied Mrs. Robertson.

"You are quite mistaken, Mamma," said Kate; "she made no remark about it."

"Then why do you wish it changed—all our other governesses have slept there?"

"More shame for us to allow it!" continued Kate, indignantly. "I always objected to their being put out there, with the servants, but, Mamma, Miss Thornville cannot remain in it; with the draught coming directly on her bed, she will catch a severe cold this bitter weather."

"Why should she more than the others?" observed Clara.

"If you approve of the room so much, I would advise you to exchange with Miss Thornville," remarked Kate, sarcastically.

"Nonsense, Kate," said her mother; "I suppose her bed can be moved out of the draught; I cannot have my governess changing from room to room, at every whim and caprice!"

"But, Mamma," replied Kate, "recollect Miss Thornville has been accustomed to every comfort, and it is not likely she will put up with such a room; you must not forget her former position."

"Oh, if she condescends to become a

governess," said Clara, "she must forget all her airs and graces."

"I quite differ from you," Kate said, "I think, Mamma, I had better tell Sarah to remove Miss Thornville's things into the blue-room—that will suit her nicely."

"Really, Kate," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, angrily, "I wish you would not interfere—your cousin Charles always likes the blue-room when he is here—besides, Miss Thornville must remain where she is. Mademoiselle and Miss Ellerton were just as good, and they never complained."

"They never complained to you, Mamma, because they knew it was of no use; but poor Mademoiselle told me no Frenchwoman would ever put her *femme de chambre* in such a room, much less her governess; and Miss Ellerton said, only the day she left, if she had remained any longer, she should have died of the cold."

"Oh! grand Miss Ellerton!" said Clara; "she did not deserve anything better—the horrid flirt!"

"Every governess is a flirt who happens to marry," observed Kate, satirically.

"Miss Ellerton was dreadfully ungrateful," said Mrs. Robertson; "I wish, Kate, you would not make such a fuss about the governesses."

"Mamma, I make no fuss," said Kate: "will you tell me which room Miss Thornville is to have?"

"The one she is now in," replied Mrs. Robertson, who was thoroughly out of temper.

"Very well, Mamma," answered Kate, with provoking coolness, "then I shall give Miss Thornville mine, and take the verandah-room myself."

"Kate, this is too bad!" said her mother.

"Suppose, Mamma," continued Kate, coldly, "that Clara and I ever had the misfortune to become governesses?"

"How silly," exclaimed Clara; "as if such a thing were possible."

"Just as probable as Miss Thornville thought it a year ago," replied Kate, with a contemptuous curl of the lip. "How should

you like us, Mamma," she continued, "to be put in a wretched little room a lady's maid would refuse to occupy?"

"You make me quite out of temper, Kate," said her mother.

"I am very sorry," said Kate, in an indifferent tone; "I shall give orders to have my room arranged—" and Kate moved towards the door.

"Kate, how can you?" exclaimed Mrs. Robertson; "just fancy what the servants will think!"

Kate made no answer, her hand was upon the handle of the door. "I cannot have you give up your room," continued Mrs. Robertson, in despair. "I suppose you must have your own way, and this stupid governess be moved."

"Then I will order Sarah to prepare the blue-room at once," said Kate.

"Oh, anything you like," replied her mother; "but I am determined MissThornville shall not stay."

Kate took no notice of this, but left the

room to get ready for luncheon—she always remained as long as possible in her riding-dress, her most becoming costume, and she was often to be seen loitering about the house and grounds in her habit, as if to prolong the feeling of perfect independence and enjoyment she always experienced when on horseback. Luncheon passed tolerably quietly; Mr. Robertson had been summoned to a parish meeting, so Kate took the bottom of the table, and with her usual proud reserve, talked very little except to Millicent, who was doing her utmost to prevent the children becoming wild, as was frequently the case in their father's absence. Mrs. Robertson and Clara, having a little recovered from their annoyance, and wishing to hear of Kate's visit to the Chase, made many overtures at reconciliation, hoping to elicit her opinion of Lord Fortescue, who, they had learnt from Mr. Robertson, had given them shelter, but to no avail. Kate was more cold and stately than before, and Millicent was not sorry when they were emancipated from the

dining-room; she felt sure Kate's attention would only increase the dislike, she imagined, Mrs. Robertson had already taken to her.

Millicent did not see anything more of Kate till the evening, when she was sitting alone in the school-room, with a book in her hand, which, however, she was not reading, for her eyes were fixed on the fire, and were filled with tears. A knock at the door made Millicent start up; she thought it was Mrs. Robertson, but, instead, Kate entered the room.

"I hope I have not disturbed you, Miss Thornville," she said; "but, I thought, perhaps, you would be kind enough to give me my first German lesson; but, if you are engaged, another time will do as well."

"Oh, no; I have nothing to do," replied Millicent. "I shall be so glad to begin with you."

"Perhaps you would like to come to my dominions, then," said Kate, kindly. "I told Benson to light candles, and make up a good fire; you will find it more cheerful than the school-room."

Kate was right; her boudoir was certainly more cheerful—it was a luxurious apartment, full of pictures and flowers, little tables heaped up with books, and strewn about with unfinished scraps of writing. There were plenty of easy chairs, too, and couches; and in one corner stood a cottage piano, with a pile of music on the floor, and a guitar by its side, with a long blue ribbon hanging from it. Kate moved some books off a delicious little couch, and, drawing it to the fire, said—"Miss Thornville, will you sit here—we can have our table near us; it is too cold to sit far away from the fire to-night."

"Have you any German books?" asked Millicent.

"Only a few old ones my brother had at school," replied Kate; "but really, Miss Thornville, I am afraid you don't feel inclined for study this evening—you look so very pale—are you unwell?"

"I have only a little stiff neck," said Millicent; "there was such a draught near my bed

last night; but I have asked the servants if there could not be some list nailed over the door."

"Miss Thornville, I am so very sorry," said Kate, in an apologising tone; "but you are to have another room. I told Sarah to remove your things—I am really ashamed you should have suffered from the cold."

"It was very cold," said Millicent, rather sadly.

Kate looked concerned; she wanted to be kind and agreeable to Millicent, and fancied she was too distant.

"Miss Thornville" she said, after a pause, "I don't think we will read to-night; I will work, and you shall take your ease; a *tête-à-tête* conversation will remove some of our reserve, and make us better acquainted with each other."

Millicent saw Kate was wishing to be friendly, and thought she ought also to try and exert herself, though the labours of the day had made her feel very languid.

"I shall be quite ashamed to be idle," she said, smiling.

"Oh, never mind," said Kate, "you can talk all the more; I hear you were at the Rectory this morning?"

"Yes; we took refuge from the storm."

"And what do you think of Mr. Seymour; is he not charming?"

"Yes; he is just what I imagined—the personification of kindness."

"I knew he would be," said Kate, with an expression of pleasure; "I called there after you. Shall I repeat what he said of you?"

"Yes, if you please."

"Mind, it is flattering," said Katie.

"Then, perhaps, I had better not hear it, for fear of becoming vain."

"Tush!" said Kate—"what nonsense!—He said, he hoped I should be kind to you, for you were a very sweet girl, and just the sort of companion he had long wished for me."

"Did he say so? how kind!" exclaimed Millicent, her cheek kindling with pleasure.

"Yes, and Mrs. Seymour passed her judgment on you as an exceedingly lady-like girl, very modest, and pretty—dear old lady!"

"What a sweet little child Mary is!" said Millicent.

"She is an angel," replied Kate; "and she told me you were such a kind lady, with curls."

Millicent laughed, and said, "I did not know my curls had such attractions."

"I am glad you are already a favourite at the Rectory," said Kate; "and you like them, I can see, by your face."

"I could not help liking them," replied Millicent; "I long to see Mr. Seymour in his church."

Kate did not speak for a minute, and then she said, "Mr. Seymour sometimes gives me advice—I cannot call it a lecture, for he never scolds—but if he could be wrong, I fancy he may be in his views about amusements."

"What amusements?" asked Millicent.

"Oh, theatres, and that sort of thing—of

course, they are not fit for clergymen, but that does not apply to other people."

"Do you not think it does, to a certain degree?" asked Millicent.

"Oh, of course, if persons approve of such dreadfully strict views," replied Kate; "but I must say, I enjoy the amusements clergymen tell us are wrong."

"Oh, Miss Robertson!" exclaimed Millicent.

"What is the matter?" said Kate; "we were intended to enjoy the world, and not be gloomy."

"We are not to live here for ever," said Millicent—"I have seen enough to know that"—and the tears filled her eyes.

"I did not intend to make you dull," said Kate. "I never think of such gloomy things—young people were made to be happy."

"There is no happiness like that religion affords," said Millicent; "it is only that enables me to bear my trials."

Kate did not make any answer, but, draw-

ing her chair closer to the fire, she said, "Do you think you shall be very unhappy here?"

"That is scarcely a fair question, after such a short sojourn," replied Millicent.

"Rather premature, certainly," said Kate; "but I will do all I can to make you happy, and then, perhaps, you will be able to endure Staplehurst, for my sake; I should like you to care for me, and be my friend."

Millicent looked surprised.

"Perhaps you do not like sudden friendships," continued Kate; "I assure you I do not, generally, but I have been longing for some one about my own age, whom I could like; and, directly I saw you, I fancied you were the very person I had been longing for—do you think me very romantic?"

Millicent's voice trembled, as she said, "Dear Miss Robertson, you must see by my dark dress how lonely I am; I shall be very glad of your friendship, and truly grateful to all those who will be kind to me."

"I shall take you to the Rectory the first

opportunity—I should like you to get the Seymours' friendship—it is worth having."

"Thank you," said Millicent; "they were so kind as to ask me to visit them."

There was a pause of some minutes, and then Millicent said, timidly, "Your Mamma said something this morning about the school-room staircase; I did not quite understand her; but am I expected to go up that way?"

Kate coloured deeply—"I would not advise you to use the side stairs, unless you choose, or are in a hurry; our last governess, Miss Ellerton, never went that way at all; and when Mamma sees you intend to go up the front stairs, she will not interfere, after a time."

"I hope so," said Millicent, in a tone of sadness; "I never thought a governess's life would be free from trials, but I did not expect to find them of this nature."

"Oh, woman! woman!" exclaimed Katie, indignantly—"if it were not in your nature to

tyrannise over your own sex! I have written half a book on the subject," she continued.

"What subject?" asked Millicent, hardly knowing what Kate was talking about.

"Oh, the horrid way women tyrannise over each other! I hate my own sex!" and Katie threw her embroidery vehemently on the table. "If a man has a tutor," she went on, "he does not make it the business of his life to render him miserable; he joins the family at dinner, and enters freely into the conversation —not so the governess; she is pushed off with a lunch, or school-room dinner—a horrid leg of mutton and baked apples, which are considered good for the children, and so are quite good enough for her!—If the boys ride, the tutor rides with them; but woe be to the unfortunate governess who dares put her foot in the stirrup. The tutor enjoys the evening circle —not so the governess; she is either incarcerated the whole evening in the school-room, or else about an hour before bed-time, the drawing-room door opens, and a girl glides in—she

may be young and pretty, but, still all the same, she invariably wears a chokingly high dress, and very long sleeves—woe be to her, if she tries to look like other girls! She seats herself apart from the rest, on the edge of some lonely sofa, or turns over a forsaken book of prints; no one speaks to her, for fear of being thought singular; the proud are too much wrapped up in their self-importance, and the kind are too timid to venture. If there happens to be a very disagreeable, or stupid person, who wishes to play at chess, or a fourth is wanted at whist, she is summoned, or else she passes the evening with her own bitter thoughts, and glides out as she came in—the governess—and forgotten!" Here Kate stopped suddenly, for she saw the tears silently stealing down Millicent's cheeks,—"Miss Thornville, do pardon me, I did not know I was so thoughtless," she exclaimed; "my description does not apply to you, I will take care of that; I know it is very hard to be perpetually dictated to, and crossed; but the

best plan is to take no notice—you cannot think how soon this checks all annoyances—pray, forget what I have said—shall we have a game of chess, or do you play backgammon? I must see you cheerful."

Millicent could not resist Kate's kind efforts to amuse her; and, sitting down to chess, forgot her troubles in the intricacies of the game. When it was over, she felt thoroughly tired, and was really glad when Kate volunteered to show her the new room. Miss Robertson had been there before, and seen that everything was arranged properly, and the blazing fire revealed to Millicent's gaze a pleasant room; which, though not very large, was nearly as comfortable as her own at Heatherton.

"This is very nice, thank you, Miss Robertson," said Millicent, glancing wearily round; "I shall feel quite at home here."

"That is what I mean you to feel," replied Kate; "I always have my own way in everything, that is one comfort."

"Are you sure that it is always a comfort

to have our own way?" said Millicent, smiling.

"Mr. Seymour asked me the same question, only this morning," said Kate.

"And how did you answer it?" said Millicent.

"Miss Thornville," replied Kate, "I shall not talk to you any longer, to-night; you are quite tired, we will discuss anything you like to-morrow—you know my christian name by this time, I should think," she continued—"I am Kate, and you are———?"

"Millicent," was the reply.

"Well, then, dear Millicent, I bid thee heartily farewell; and may balmy slumbers and pleasant dreams visit your pillow," said Kate, playfully.

"And to you, dear Kate, I say, may the angel of peace watch over you," returned Millicent.

Kate started; "Mr. Seymour, again; how very strange you should use his language."

"I am pleased to think his wishes for you are the same as mine," replied Millicent.

"Dear Miss Thornville," said Kate, warmly, "I trust we shall, indeed, be friends; and our friendship shall commence with a kiss of peace —adieu Millicent," and she took up her candle and was gone.

CHAPTER V.

"Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
'Life is but an empty dream!'
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul.

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day."

LONGFELLOW.

"KATE," said Mrs. Robertson, the next morning, "I suppose you are not going to the Rectory, to-day?"

"I will, if you have any message, Mamma,"

replied Kate, only too glad of an excuse to visit the Seymours.

"I only wanted you to take my quarterly subscription to the Clothing Charity; I find, by some mistake, I forgot to send it in at Christmas, and Mrs. Seymour must think it so strange."

"She must, indeed, Mamma," said Kate; "the best plan will be for me to take it at once, and explain why it was not sent before. I have nothing to do this morning, and, after lunch, Papa and I are going to ride with Tom to the railway."

In a few minutes Kate had her bonnet on, and was walking to the Rectory. The weather had changed and it was thawing fast, so Katie stepped daintily over the ground. A variety of thoughts filled her mind, among which Mr. Seymour was most frequent. There were not two persons in the parish more opposite in character than Katie and Mr. Seymour, and yet there were, perhaps, no two who thought more of each other, though in a totally different

way. The good Rector was extremely interested in the younger members of his flock, and in Kate especially, for he saw in that proud girl, a fine noble spirit placed amid those so uncongenial, that he could scarcely wonder, though he grieved at her cold indifference to them, and not a day passed without this goodChristian pastor, praying that she, whose character evinced so much promise, and who, under proper influence might become so truly good and valuable in her family circle, would be numbered some day, and that soon, among those, who not only by outward, but by inward regeneration, are made 'inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.' It was very differently, however, that Kate thought of him, though we must not reveal Kate's thoughts, but follow her to the Rectory.

Little Mary was sitting on a cushion before the fire, nursing a kitten; Mrs. Seymour was working in her arm-chair; Mr. Seymour was standing by her, while Lord Fortescue occupied the opposite side of the fire when Kate entered the snug drawing-room. She smiled

when she saw Lord Fortescue, and he smiled, too, and said it really seemed as if they were to meet; and little Mary clapped her hands with glee as Katie sat down on half her cushion, at the child's particular request, and admired her kitten, and no one could have doubted then, (though they might before,) that Kate was happy.

"How your kitten has grown, Mary," she said, after she had given her mother's messages to Mrs. Seymour; "what shall you call her?"

"Shall she be named after you, Aunt Katie?" asked the child, simply.

"Oh, that is much too pretty for a cat, Mary!" said Lord Fortescue; "but, Miss Robertson, I did not know you were Mary's aunt?"

"Not by relationship, but by love," replied Kate. "Suppose we name pussy Tiny, Mary, will that do?"

"Oh, yes! Aunt Katie, that is a dear little name," said Mary, clapping her hands.

"If you call Miss Robertson aunt, you

must call me cousin Arthur," said Lord Fortescue; "you know, Mary, I am your cousin."

"Then ain't you Aunt Katie's 'nephew?" asked the little girl.

Kate and Lord Fortescue laughed, and little Mary laughed because they did, and asked her Papa if Cousin Arthur were not really Aunt Katie's nephew; and, though she believed her father implicitly in all he said, yet she could not understand the want of relationship between them, and sat quite still for some time, trying to realize it in her own mind, stroking her kitten, and listening to its purring.

"I think the frost is quite breaking, now," said Katie; "it was thawing fast when I came."

"I am glad of it," said Lord Fortescue.

"Glad?" asked Katie. "Do you not like frosts?"

"Yes, for myself, but not for the poor," he replied.

"How very considerate you are," said Katie, getting up from Mary's cushion.

"If we all considered each other with brotherly love, we should be rewarded by much happiness," said Mr. Seymour.

Kate turned her proud face away, for she fancied he meant this for her, and she felt anything personal.

Presently, Mr. Seymour continued—"I wish the lower classes were more thought of; I always look upon them as specially placed under our care by Divine Providence, and laity, as well as clergy, will be required to give an account of their stewardship."

"I think," replied Lord Fortescue, his face kindling with animation, "that we improve ourselves as much by our intercourse with the poor, as they do by our kindness."

"Quite true, Fortescue—quite true," said Mr. Seymour. "I should be glad if every one entertained the same opinion."

Kate still continued to look away—she was conscious of not thinking as they did. Pre-

sently, Lord Fortescue turned towards her, and said, "Miss Robertson, you like my little church?"

"Oh, yes—that charming little church in the wood."

"You have been over it, then?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"Papa and I were there yesterday," Kate replied.

"Our first meeting," observed Lord Fortescue; "and I managed to entice you into my solitary old house."

"I liked the Chase very much," said Kate; "solitary old places always make me think."

"Yes, what a train of reflections looking at an old house calls forth!" he replied; and his former expression of melancholy stole over his countenance.

"What a wonderful gift is that of thought," remarked Mr. Seymour—"one of the many causes we have for gratitude."

"Yes," replied Lord Fortescue, "we ought to rejoice at being able to think of heaven."

"And this beautiful earth," added Katie.

"It is sweeter to think of heaven, do you not think so, Miss Robertson?" replied Lord Fortescue; and he looked at her with an expression which wore the stamp of the land he loved.

"There is much that is beautiful here," Kate answered evasively; "how lovely the sunny days and moonlight nights!"

"They are transient," said Lord Fortescue.

"But sweet while they last," observed Mr. Seymour.

"Thankfulness ought to be an easy lesson," said his mother; "we have so much to remind us of it."

"Indeed, we have," replied Mr. Seymour; "and if we only knew how to look for them, we should find fresh mercies at every step; the blessings of this life certainly predominate over the trials."

"It takes a long while before we learn that lesson," said Lord Fortescue;" I am only just now beginning to see it."

"Do you not think," asked Kate, "that some people have a great many more troubles than pleasures?—our new governess, for instance; what can be worse than her trials, poor girl! and I am sure she has plenty of them; for my part, I wonder how she has borne them all!"

"What has happened?" said Mrs. Seymour, putting down her work with a look of interest.

"She lost both her parents, suddenly, and all her property, within a year, and has descended, from being an heiress, to be a governess; you must own those are troubles enough, for a girl of nineteen!" Kate said, looking at Mr. Seymour.

"And yet, if you were to ask her, I have no doubt she could tell you of many causes for gratitude; you, yourself, might become one," he said, looking at her earnestly.

"I, Mr. Seymour!". exclaimed Kate, in surprise.

"Yes, you can be such a friend to her, that she will thank God for having sent her to Sta-

plehurst, instead of allotting her some dreary life, with no one to help or care for her."

"You are making me out too good," said Kate, colouring; "I am determined to like her; but I fear I shall not be able to do all you appear to wish me."

"You must first pray that a wish to fulfil the golden rule may be put in your heart. Miss Thornville is about your own age, and perfectly on an equality with yourself in education and position. Just reverse your circumstances, and how would you expect her to act towards yourself?"

"Oh, I should expect to be treated as well as the rest of the family," replied Kate, proudly; "and I intend, I assure you, Mr. Seymour, not only to consider her so myself, but to insist upon every one paying her respect and attention."

"Very true, Katie—very nice," said Mrs. Seymour.

Mr. Seymour, however, smiled. "Miss Robertson," he said, "I am afraid you will get yourself and Miss Thornville entan-

gled in a slight warfare; you must be very careful how you act; show her every kindness and consideration yourself; and impress upon Fanny and Augustus respect for their governess; but take care not to make her disliked by Mrs. Robertson and Clara, by bringing her forward injudiciously; take care always to make good use of favourable opportunities; and, above all things, do not render her discontented with her sphere of life; help her forward in it, and elevate her position, instead of detracting from it."

"Everard always sets every one to work who comes near him," said Mrs. Seymour, smiling.

"Miss Robertson has a delightful task" observed Lord Fortescue; "there is no class of persons who claim pity and kindness more than governesses."

"I wish Dickens would take up their cause," said Kate," and write a stirring book on the subject; it would do a great deal of good—his satire is so clever, and he is such a favourite with the people."

"I thought you were going to take up the subject yourself," said Mr. Seymour, with a quiet smile.

"Oh, Mr. Seymour, you are always reminding me of my attempts at scribbling."

"Why should you not make them something more than merely attempts?"

"My want of perseverance, I suppose; you are thinking of the Sunday-school," replied Kate, laughing.

"I was very sorry you gave up your class," said Mr. Seymour, gravely.

"It was much better than keeping it, when I found I did not improve the children; if they were stupid, I became vexed; then they cried, and I thought every one would think I was scolding them; and if I said nothing, they learnt no lesson at all."

"We will have a little talk on perseverance, some day," said Mr. Seymour, good-humouredly; "but," he added, taking out his watch, "I must hurry away now; I have a great deal before me to-day, and a long walk to the other end of the parish."

"Everard, dear," said Mrs. Seymour, "as you pass Jessie Blane's, just look in, and tell her I am in no hurry for the work, and don't let her take the trouble to send for her dinner to-morrow; Ann shall run round with it after church."

"I must make a memorandum of your messages, mother," he replied, smiling. "Fortescue, if you have nothing better to do, you might walk with me as far as Stony End; I want to talk over your plans with you."

Lord Fortescue took up his hat. "I should like nothing better," he said. "Good-bye, Miss Robertson; I shall do myself the pleasure of calling at Staplehurst Park very soon;" and Mr. Seymour and his young cousin were quickly on the road to Stony End.

"Well, Fortescue," said Mr. Seymour, cheerfully, "I am very glad we have got you at Horton again."

"And I am delighted to return. In all my wanderings, I have never seen any place like

my beloved home." He spoke hurriedly, and with great sadness in his voice.

"And what are you going to do, my dear fellow, now you are at home?" asked Mr. Seymour, anxious to prevent him becoming melancholy.

"To tell you the truth, I have not thought much about it yet; I suppose you are going to set me to work, as you did Miss Robertson, just now. You are essentially a practical man, Everard."

"Mine is a practical life," replied Mr. Seymour, "and so ought yours to be; I shall make quite a curate of you; I consider your little hamlet of Horton more your charge than mine."

"I know I ought to do something for my tenantry; but how must I begin?" he said, in rather a hopeless tone.

"First, you must begin at once, and then you must set to work diligently and prayerfully; never let a day pass without getting something done."

"I was thinking, when the church is finished, of building schools," said Lord Fortescue.

"A very good plan; it is a long walk for the children to Staplehurst; and Mr. Robertson was saying only yesterday he should be very glad to give a couple of hundred towards any charity I might suggest; and several among our farmers would be only too pleased to further any place of education for their labourers' children."

"I would rather build them entirely myself," observed Lord Fortescue.

"That is selfish of you, Fortescue," said Mr. Seymour; "you must not offend our good friends by refusing their assistance; besides, a few hundreds are not to be despised—you must not waste money—what you save in your schools, will go towards something else; and, recollect, your church will be a continued expense—even when the building is all paid for; there will be the insurance, and the warming and lighting, if you mean to carry out

your plan of evening service; and you will want an organ, and there will be a clerk to to pay; and then, I suppose, you intend to keep the incumbent till you see how the pews let."

"Yes, I see," replied Lord Fortescue, thoughtfully, "there will be plenty for me to do."

"But this is principally work for the purse, though, of course, it involves other business—it is only the occupation of a time. I want you, Fortescue, to set about every-day-work—let every day have an object in view."

"You are showing me quite a new phase of life; hitherto I have lived for myself, not willingly—for it is a most unsatisfactory kind of existence; but circumstances made me do so."

"Your life is only just commencing," replied Mr. Seymour; "do not dwell on the past at all, except on past mercies; but look hopefully on the future. There is a work before you; take it steadily in hand; you are almost too young yet for parliamentary duties; therefore, let your time be given to duties

around you. Inquire into the state of your tenantry; do not leave them to the care of mercenaries; you are much better qualified to judge of their condition than a steward or bailiff; but in giving them relief, never give it unadvisedly—look well into the case before you bestow your money."

"You will make quite a model-land-owner of me," exclaimed Lord Fortescue.

"And a model land-owner makes model tenantry," replied Mr. Seymour; "but, *àpropos* of tenantry, what is to become of your Yorkshire people?"

"That is rather a source of embarrassment to me," said Lord Fortescue. "I have no love for Ashburton Hall; but still, the people have a claim on me, and I cannot bear them to be neglected."

"Why not find a good tenant, and let it," replied Mr. Seymour; "you cannot live at both places."

"No, but it would break Eager's heart; he has much more pride than his master."

"Oh, we can easily win Eager over," replied Mr. Seymour; "for my part, I think he would only be too glad to return to Horton."

Lord Fortescue was silent for a few minutes, and then he said—"I think, Everard, your plan is worth consideration, provided I found some one who would care for the tenantry, and look after their interests."

"That will take time; but, no doubt, such a person is to be found; it would be of double value—the property would be kept in order, and your means of doing good to others will be increased."

"I was thinking," said Lord Fortescue, "that, perhaps, I ought to have a few alterations at the Chase; some of the ceilings are rather in a bad condition, but I dread alterations. I could not bear to touch rooms consecrated to bygone recollections, which are to me almost hallowed ground."

"I would advise you not to make alterations, at present; by and by, if ever you marry, that will be time enough for decora-

tions and improvements; any repairs that are required, you should have done without delay—the park wall at the Staplehurst end, for instance, is sadly dilapidated, and quite inviting to poachers"

"I am glad you are of my opinion about alterations. I like the old place best as it is; there is a remembrance of the past about every step. The past is melancholy, but I like to dwell on it."

"Fortescue," said Mr. Seymour, gravely, "you must pardon me, if I speak too plainly, and touch upon hallowed subjects; but let me beg of you not to indulge in, and foster, melancholy, it is highly injurious to yourself and others. God forbid that I should wish you to forget those who have gone before; a mother's memory is the sweetest remembrance a son can cling to; but think of her with cheerful patience, in the full persuasion of ere long joining her, and let her counsel and advice be to you a talisman through life. But, beyond this, it is sinful to dwell continually

on the past. I speak from experience," he continued, with a slight faltering in his voice; "It is more invigorating and improving, to keep a cheerful tone of mind. The Apostle Paul says, 'Rejoice evermore;' and, by brooding over bygone sorrows, instead of rejoicing in present mercies, we keep up a spirit of repining."

"Dear Everard," exclaimed Lord Fortescue, "far be it from me to repine, but surrounded by the scenes of the past, how can I fail to dwell on those things?"

"You must include it among the faults to be guarded against; it is essentially selfish, a really unselfish person never sits idly down to think of himself, but acts for others—never let a day pass, as I said before, without some employment; the conscientious land-owner has as much work as the merchant, or even the mechanic; I do not want to presume on your good nature, and dictate too much, but begin each morning by some business—if there is nothing to occupy your attention on the

grounds, visit in your ride some of your tenantry; either call on one of the farmers and consult with him on the best way of cultivating the land, ascertain the number of his labourers, that you may call on each individually, and see into their welfare, or else look into the dwellings of some of the poor, form plans for improving their cottages, and finding work for those who are unemployed; there will be plenty of thought-work, as well as head-work there—and when you return home and contrast your affluence with their poverty—in many cases cheerfully borne—there will not be much occasion left for repining—and as for society, I need not assure you, my dear fellow, how thoroughly welcome you will always be at the Rectory, at all times and seasons; come when and as often as you like, the oftener the more welcome, never sit at home, feeling lonely, while we have a house to receive you in; you may find the Robertsons agreeable neighbours, they are very kind-hearted, hospitable people, and I think you

would do well to return their call as soon as possible, do not let them think difference of rank keeps you back."

"Decidedly not," he replied, "life will seem different to me with your influence to guide my path, my mother would rejoice could she know how you care for me—tell me everything you think, Everard, don't spare me—I want rousing—I have been looked upon as a being above the ordinary duties of life, till I fear my thoughts have become almost entirely centred on self."

"Forget that now," said Mr. Seymour, cheerfully, "I am sorry we must part here for the present, I expect Farmer James will keep me a long while, he is very ill, I cannot hurry away, so do not wait for me; I am afraid mine has been a lecturing conversation, I have to thank you, dear Fortescue, for bearing it so well."

"I have rather to thank you for giving it; I have promised Aunt to help to demolish her dinner on so Sunday, I do not know if I shall see you to-morrow."

"You had better join us directly after morning service on Sunday. *Au revoir*, my dear fellow, dont forget the park wall, or you will be taken by storm, some night."

"No fear of that, Everard," said Lord Fortescue, as he watched Mr. Seymour, till he entered the farmer's house, and then turned back to Staplehurst, with his mind full of new and active thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

'All may mend; and sympathies are healing; and reason hath its influence with the worst;
And in those worst is ample hope, if only thou hast charity and faith.'

TUPPER.

MRS. ROBERTSON and Clara were extremely anxious to see Lord Fortescue; Kate told them he said he should call soon, and during the rest of the morning every ring and sound of horses' feet seemed to announce their expected visitor. The next day, Mrs. Robertson delayed her drive, on purpose that she might be at home if Lord Fortescue came; and she and Clara sat in the drawing-room in state, to make a favourable impression on the young

lord. Not so Kate—she seemed perfectly unconcerned—and after she returned from her ride, she spent the rest of the morning in the conservatories, among her favourite plants. It was about an hour after luncheon, and Katie had just disturbed her Mamma's peace of mind, by coming into the drawing-room in her garden bonnet, with a large flower-pot in her hands, when Lord Fortescue was announced; she met him with her usual perfect ease, apologized for not being able to shake hands, introduced him to her mother and sister, and then called his attention to her beautiful camellia, which he assisted her to place in the flower-stand.

"I am very glad to see you at Staplehurst, my lord," said Mrs. Robertson, trying to appear at her ease.

"You are very kind," he replied; "I hope you will often let me come—I know no one here, except the Seymours, and I shall be delighted to make the acquaintance of your family."

"I need not say your lordship will be always welcome, whenever you choose to honour us with a visit," said Mrs. Robertson.

"You have given me a *carte blanche*, which I shall certainly use," he replied; "so, Mrs. Robertson, if you have too much of me, it will be the fault of your own kindness."

"Papa will be sorry not to have seen you—he is gone out riding," said Clara, anxious to put in a word.

Kate did not give him time to answer her sister, but said, "Mrs. Seymour tells me you sing a great deal, Lord Fortescue; I suppose you acquired a musical taste on the continent?"

"Oh, no," he replied, hurriedly; "I have loved music from a child; I cannot recollect the time when I did not delight in listening to its sounds."

"Do you prefer vocal or instrumental music?" asked Kate.

"Certainly vocal," he replied; "and perhaps you will think I have very bad taste—

but I give a decided preference to the old English ballads over the new style of Italian bravuras."

"Oh, do you?" said Clara. "The operatic music is so much more effective and showy!"

"I know it is much more in vogue at the present day, and I suppose I ought not to expose my old-fashioned tastes."

"I should have thought, my lord, having been so much abroad, you would have been inclined to like everything foreign," said Mrs. Robertson.

"On the contrary, I am perfectly English; and, though I saw much that was to be admired and imitated during my long sojourn on the continent, still I assure you, Mrs. Robertson, I find no place like home."

"Well, my lord," said Mrs. Robertson, getting quite confidential, "I was very much of your opinion. I recollect when first I was married, Mr. Robertson took me to Berlin; what with the bad cooking, and the smoking, I was not sorry to come back to Staplehurst."

"I have experienced very little of the disagreeables of German cooking," said Lord Fortescue, smiling; "I passed most of my time in France and Italy during my long absence from England."

"Were you away many years, my lord?" asked Mrs. Robertson.

"Almost immediately after I left Horton, till three years ago, when I went to Oxford, we were constantly on the continent, with the exception of a few flying visits to England."

"And I suppose you spent your vacations abroad as well?" coutinued Mrs. Robertson

"No, my home was at Ashburton during my college life; after Lady Fortescue's death, my uncle settled down entirely in Yorkshire."

Kate thought Lord Fortescue might not like Mrs. Robertson's questioning, so she asked him if he sang duets?

"No, never," he replied, "but if you will be so kind as to teach me, and sing with me, I should like to learn."

"It would be very amusing," said Katie, "I

have no one to sing with, my sister's voice is so very weak, I quite drown it; besides, we are both sopranos."

"Oh Kate, I am quite a contralto," said Clara, indignantly.

"When may we have the honour of your Lordship's company to dinner?" asked Mrs. Robertson, in a fright, that the girls should dispute.

"It will be a great pleasure to me to dine with you, whenever it suits you, Mrs. Robertson," he replied.

"Suppose we fix Monday—if it is quite convenient," she said.

"I seldom have any engagements, and I shall be delighted to join you."

"Then we shall count upon your lordship's company—we dine at six o'clock; I am sorry my son will not be here to meet you, but he went yesterday from home for a few days."

"You are very kind to take compassion on my solitude," he replied, "it will be quite a new era in my life to enjoy the society of ladies, so if I am old-fashioned and odd, you

must correct me, Miss Robertson." He appealed to Kate, and looked pleased and cheerful when she talked to him! and Kate pitied the melancholy expression on his young face, and tried to amuse him. Mrs. Robertson also did her best at conversation and after a long visit, Lord Fortescue left with an *au revoir*.

"What a charming young man," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, when the hall-door had fairly shut after their visitor.

Kate did not answer, she was altering the position of her camellia.

"He seems very childish," observed Clara, throwing herself on the sofa, and resuming her novel.

"I suppose you are disappointed, then," said Kate; "I never knew you, Clara, to be satisfied with any one."

"I am not fond of violent friendships at first sight; besides, Kate, it would not do for us both to fall in love with the same person."

"There is no fear of that," said Kate, proudly; "I relinquish all pretensions to you."

"Lord Fortescue would never think of me," replied Clara, pettishly.

"That is the most sensible thing you have said to-day," her sister replied, pulling up the blind by her flowers, and then left the room.

"What, at lessons still, Miss Thornville!" said Kate, as she came into the school-room, and found poor Millicent looking very fagged and tired, over Fanny's music lesson, who was crying, and seemed dreadfully out of humour.

"We shall be finished soon," said Millicent; "Augustus has done his lessons long ago."

"She likes Augustus best," sobbed Fanny; "she let him off his history."

"I suspect that is not true, Fanny," said Kate. "If I were a little girl, I should be ashamed to give so much trouble; do, Miss Thornville, let the child go, I should not trouble myself any more about her, you are spoiling your half-holiday—she does not deserve so much pains."

Millicent looked rather distressed.

"I cannot let Fanny go yet, Miss Robertson—I must not break my word, and I said this exercise should be done."

"Well, then, make haste, Fanny!" exclaimed Kate. "I want to talk to Miss Thornville—I shall wait for her here, and if you are not good, I shall tell Mamma not to let you come down to-night."

"I don't care if you do," said Fanny; "you will see I shall come down all the same."

"What a dreadfully rude child you are," said Kate; "you will never be half as good as Mary Seymour."

"I am sure you won't," pouted Fanny.

"Hush! Fanny—you must not speak so to your sister," said Millicent, gently, while she longed for Kate to go; but Kate took up a book, and sat down on a low stool by the fire; she had got hold of some new stories for children, and, for a few minutes, they engaged her attention. But Fanny's continued obstinacy made her feel quite impatient, and she looked up suddenly, about to speak angrily to

her sister—but there was something just then in Millicent's manner that checked her interfering, and, instead of speaking, Kate sat and watched her with a feeling of astonishment. It seemed impossible to Kate for any one to put up with Fanny's perverseness, without losing their own temper. But, though Millicent's face had a sad, troubled expression, there was no frown, no passionate look, and her voice retained its usual gentle tone. She did not urge or hurry Fanny, but helped her quietly through the difficult passages, though she made her play them after her—nor did she give way in the least, till the whole task was gone through: and when, at last, it was finished, she did not scold Fanny, and say it might have been done sooner, but she told her she might go and play with Augustus—and, shutting up the piano, Millicent turned round, saying, "Now, Miss Robertson, I am ready to talk to you."

"I had no idea how bad-tempered Fanny could be!" exclaimed Kate. "Why did you not let her shut up the piano?"

"For the very reason that she was out of temper," replied Millicent. "Probably, if I had asked her, she would have refused to do it."

"Then I would have made her," said Kate.

"You could not without a scene," replied Millicent.

"Oh, then, I would have marched her off to bed," said Kate.

"I do not think so," said Millicent, smiling.

"You have never seen me with the children," replied Kate. "You have no idea how cross I can be."

"Do you make them better by it?" asked Millicent.

"What an odd question!" said Kate. "Do you know you are quite an enigma to me? I have been watching you for at least twenty minutes, and I cannot think how you can keep your temper."

"It would not do to lose it—then I should have been as bad as Fanny."

"Miss Thornville," said Kate, after a

moment's pause," "do you like being a governess?"

"No," replied Millicent, decidedly, "I really do not."

"Then, how can you bear everything so beautifully?" asked Kate. "You have been here three days, and not once have I seen you lose your temper, or even get the least excited, with plenty to provoke you; while I have been cross, and felt angry, over and over again, with everything my own way."

"My new occupation is one in which I must necessarily be patient," she replied, in a tone of sadness—then she added, cheerfully, "I have undertaken a work, and I must fulfil it conscientiously. 'What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well!'—besides, there is a satisfaction, when the day is over, in feeling we have done our duty."

"You are talking exactly like Mr. Seymour," said Kate; "he is always trying to impress upon me, every one has some duty to perform—even I."

"So you have," said Millicent, a little surprised.

"Oh! for goodness sake, tell me what it is, then!" exclaimed Kate. "I have been wanting amazingly to find out what in the world I have to do."

"Oh, a great deal," said Millicent, timidly; "there is your duty to your family, and your duty to yourself."

"My duty to the family," exclaimed Kate, laughing, "why, I think I do that beautifully already. Don't I ride every day with either Papa or Tom, and do I not bring home all the news to Mamma and Clara? and then I usually scold the children a little every evening; and, I forgot—I sit down every night to that solitary little table, and dispense coffee and minute fractions of cake to my worthy relations; and when this is over, sometimes, I read them all to sleep! There, Miss Thornville, I am fulfilling your wishes to the letter."

Millicent laughed, and Kate continued—"Oh, my poor self! I have forgotten that

part of the business—what shall I say about the first person singular? I am afraid she gets neglected; there is, really, so little time for systematic study, which Mr. Seymour seems to think is the only kind that is of any good."

"Did he really say that?" said Millicent.

"Not exactly in those words, but something nearly to the same purpose; I would study more, if I had any one to take an interest in what I do. I wish I were a little child, then you would teach me, would you not, Millicent? and there would be no fear of making you angry, though I can be very provoking at times."

Kate said this in a half-playful, half-serious tone; but there was something very affectionate in the way in which she addressed Millicent by her christian name. Millicent was pleased.

"I think it is more pleasant to have you as a companion, than a pupil, Miss Robertson; and I think we might help and encourage each other."

Kate thought of Mr. Seymour's conversa-

tion on the preceding day, and she said, in a thoughtful tone—"I suppose we can." She was silent for a few minutes, and then, suddenly starting up, as if to dispel some unpleasant thought, exclaimed—"Miss Thornville, *àpropos* of pupils, I have taken one in hand; I am going to surpass you altogether by giving singing lessons."

"Who are you going to teach?" asked Millicent—"some of the village children?"

"My dear child," replied Kate, "don't insult me by such suppositions; my pupil is grown up, and, moreover, a *milord*."

"Oh, Lord Fortescue," exclaimed Millicent.

"Oui vraiment, ma chère, c'est lui, only fancy me *solfaing* with that tall young man."

"*Solfaing!*" repeated Millicent, laughing.

"No, that was only a pardonable little *mensonge*, the youth does know—his letters, I was just going to say—but I assure you, he is already learned in the discreet and improving science of music, only, unfortunately for his young lady friends, he cannot sing duets."

"He was calling here just now, was he not?" asked Millicent.

"Yes,—did you see him?"

"I merely caught a glimpse of him as he rode by. Is he nice-looking?"

"Oh, very!" replied Kate; "he has such a good face, and such lovely hair and eyes! Do you know, Millicent," she exclaimed after a pause, "I have found a strong likeness in you to Lord Fortescue?"

"Nonsense, Kate,"—and Millicent laughed.

"Really, I am quite serious. You will see him to-morrow, at church—his pew is exactly opposite ours—look if I am not right."

"I am very slow in finding likenesses," said Millicent—"besides, at church, I seldom think of persons near."

"You do not mean to say," exclaimed Kate, "that you never look off your prayer-book?"

"I wish I did not;" replied Millicent.

"There is no harm in it," said Kate. "You cannot help seeing things in church—I always

know everything that goes on—who comes, and who stays away."

"You would do for a clergyman's wife," said Millicent, laughing—she was stirring the fire at that moment, so she did not notice the colour mount to Kate's cheek, and she went on—"Does Mr. Seymour keep a curate?"

"No," replied Kate, hurriedly—"he does all the duty himself, both morning and afternoon."

"How nice!" said Millicent: "I expect a treat in hearing him preach."

"His sermons are perfection," replied Kate; "I could listen to them all day, but the worst of it is, I forget them so soon."

"Sunday must be very pleasant at Staplehurst, with such a clergyman," said Millicent.

"It is to most people," replied Kate; "but it is a dull day to me."

"Oh, Miss Robertson!" exclaimed Millicent.

"It is true—Mamma is always crosser, and the children more unbearable."

"Could you not try to make them better?" said Millicent.

"I have nothing to do with the children!" exclaimed Kate, in surprise; "I am only too happy when they are out of the way."

"I am so sorry you think that," said Millicent, gravely; "I never had a little brother or sister, but how I should have loved them; and, on Sunday, it would have been so delightful to teach them texts and hymns, and tell them of heaven."

All the pride in Kate's beautiful face vanished before that look of sorrowful reproof, and fixing her eyes with admiration on Millicent's sweet face, she said—"Millicent, you are an angel; I shall never be like you!"

"Please, do not talk so," said Millicent, colouring; "you must not flatter me."

"It is not flattery—it is the real truth; if you were not the best creature alive, you could not have borne all the troubles of the past year; poor dear—I am sure you never deserved them!"

"Oh, hush, Miss Robertson!" said Millicent, seriously; "it is really very wrong to say so."

Kate tossed her head, and, putting her hand playfully over Millicent's lips, said,—"Come, come, fair *demoiselle*, I cannot have you lecture, or I shall rebel. I came in with the express intention of telling you Lord Fortescue dines here on Monday next, and he wants very much to have some music—could we not get up a trio?"

"But I shall not join you," replied Millicent, sadly.

"Leave that to me," said Kate. "Would you like to sing?—you have the afternoon to yourself. Don't trouble your head with the children—Nurse will look after them, for the present. Come to my room, and choose some pretty songs."

Mrs. Robertson was in a wonderfully good humour after Lord Fortescue's visit, and when her husband came in from his ride, she launched forth in ecstatic praises of their new visitor.

"Yes, he seems a nice young fellow," said Mr. Robertson; "he and Katie got on very well together, the other day. He does not seem proud."

"Proud! oh, dear, no!" replied Mrs. Robertson, "he is as humble as possible; and when I asked him to dinner, he thanked me as if all the favour were on our side."

"I suppose the dinner is," said Mr. Robertson, slyly.

"John!" said Mrs. Robertson, "and he is quite an acquisition to the neighbourhood," she continued—"as nice a person as one could wish. He evidently likes Kate. I shall throw them a good deal together. Kate does us credit, does she not, John?"

"She does her school more credit," he replied. "Kate is much superior to her sister, who got a home education."

"Yes—but I could not bear all my children to be as proud," said Mrs. Robertson. "I find it sometimes hard to endure Kate's coldness."

"She does not mean it, poor dear," said Mr. Robertson, putting in a softening word for his Katie.

"I only wish she and Clara agreed better," continued Mrs. Robertson.

"Let 'em alone, my dear; girls will squabble a little, now and then—it does them good," he replied.

"I am not at all satisfied with my governess," she said, presently.

"Oh, nonsense, Mamma!" replied her husband. "I am sure she is a nice girl."

"She is too airish and whimsical," said Mrs. Robertson. "I can never put up with it."

"If she puts up with our bad-behaved children, the least we can do is to put up with her—though I don't see anything to bear with, for my part."

"That is just like you, John—you approve of everything out of opposition to me."

"Well, well, dear,—let her alone, for the present. You cannot always be changing," he said, in a distressed tone.

"There, now! to hear you talk, people would think I never kept my governesses any time."

"Well, Mamma, now don't trouble yourself so much about them. Let her take her own way with the children—it is sure to answer best."

"Oh, of course, her plans are better than mine. What husband ever did like his wife's arrangements? Ah, John, when I am gone, you will be sorry, then!"

"Come, come, Mamma," said Mr. Robertson, really fancying he had said something wrong—"you shall take your own way, I will not interfere. When is Lord Fortescue coming to dinner?"

"On Monday," replied Mrs. Robertson. "But I suppose that is wrong, too—poor women are continually doing something to displease!"—and, fancying herself a martyr, she left the room, to prepare for dinner.

CHAPTER VII.

'There stands the messenger of truth;———
. . . . . and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart.'
COWPER.

THE winter sun rose over the hills, and his slanting beams shone feebly in at Millicent's windows; she awoke with an impression that it was very late, which was confirmed by her watch; the hands pointed to half-past eight o'clock. Millicent had a great dislike to be late on Sunday morning, and felt vexed that the servant had forgotten to call her. Just then the bells had begun to send forth their sonorous voice from the old tower. Mr. Seymour

had made Sunday a happy time at Staplehurst, and the villagers felt it so; and as the sturdy ringers mounted the belfry, to usher in with glad sounds, the day of rest, they blessed God, with heart and voice for sending them such a good and holy pastor. There were no divisions, no dissensions at Staplehurst, no Jesuitical Tractarians, who sowed tares among the wheat, or trained young and promising flowers for the rank and poisonous atmosphere of Rome; no churchman railed against dissenter, or dissenter against churchman; the breath of discord never fanned the flame of strife. Over this lovely nook, embosomed among the hills of western England, peace spread her angel wings, for God had sent a holy one and true to guard his flock and prepare them for Paradise. Mr. Seymour preached heaven, and heaven's Lord, instead of forms and ceremonies; and though he loved his own division of the fold best, and thought it most pure and beautiful, yet he did not condemn or despise those who differed only in outward forms. When

first, ten years ago, the Staplehurst hills had welcomed in their young Rector, a dissenting chapel, each Sabbath, contained a little band of worshippers, but it had been long since closed, and now, all might be seen gathering instruction as it fell from the lips of their revered pastor. Dissenting mothers brought their infants to him for baptism, and dissenting sons and daughters were united in marriage at his hands, and sealed yet closer in their ties of love by his advice and blesssing.

Millicent found that not herself alone, but every one else, was late on Sunday; Kate, as usual, came in when prayers were half over; Clara did not arrive till breakfast was nearly finished; Mr. Robertson read the newspaper, and Mrs. Robertson, as Kate had hinted, seemed crosser than usual. Millicent retreated as soon as possible to the school-room, and instructed the children for a quarter of an hour in catechism; this was more pleasant than their former Sunday lessons, as Millicent, who had been accustomed to teaching in her own

village schools, knew how to make it very easy, and Augustus, and even Fanny, were as attentive as she could possibly expect. When Millicent was dressed for church, she went into the dining-room, supposing, all the family would walk together; she found, however, only Clara there, warming herself by the fire.

"It is not a very nice morning for you to go out," said Millicent; "are not you afraid, Miss Clara, of taking cold?"

"I never walk to church in winter," she replied; "Mamma and I always drive."

Millicent went to the window to look out at the snow, which had fallen thickly in the night, and was wreathed in fairy-like festoons over the shrubberies. As she was admiring the white garb in which all nature was clothed, she saw Mr. Robertson and Katie wending their way through the snowy path across the park. "Your Papa and sister are gone, I see," said Millicent; "had not the children and myself better be starting? I dislike being late."

"You cannot go till they are ready," said Clara; "there is plenty of time."

Millicent coloured at this abrupt speech, but she did not reply; and just then, Fanny, and Augustus came down, followed by Mrs. Robertson, looking very self-satisfied, in a green velvet bonnet and feathers.

"Are you ready, Mamma?" said Clara; "the brougham has been waiting at least five minutes."

"Oh, what a story, Clara," exclaimed Augustus, "it has only just come to the door."

"I cannot think how you can suffer Augustus to be so rude, Miss Thornville," said Clara, taking up her muff. "Do come, Mamma."

"Well, my dear, don't be in such a hurry," replied Mrs. Robertson, who was squeezing her hands into a tight pair of yellow gloves;—"could not we make room for Augustus in the carriage? Nurse says his chillblains are so bad, he ought not to walk."

"Then, if Augustus does not walk, I am sure I won't," said Fanny.

"We cannot have them both, Mamma!" exclaimed Clara.

"It is such a little way, my dear," pleaded Mrs. Robertson, as they all went across the hall, "Augustus can sit between us, and I will take Fanny on my lap."

"As you please, Mamma," replied Clara.

The children jumped into the brougham without any further questions; Mrs. Robertson and Clara followed, brushing by Millicent, who was standing in the hall. As the footman closed the carriage door, Augustus cried out, "Mamma, what is Miss Thornville to do?"

"Walk, to be sure, my dear," replied Mrs. Robertson; and they drove off, leaving Millicent to her own reflections; but the butler was holding open the door, and, putting down her thick crape veil, she set forth on her solitary walk. At any other time she would have found the way, over the crisp snow, sparkling in the sun, pleasant; but, now, her thoughts were too sad, for her to notice anything around. Mrs. Robertson's perfect indifference,

and Clara's cold, almost impertinent, manner, had wounded her feelings deeply. The entire dependence of her situation, and the way in which they looked down upon her, were almost more than she could bear. Tears rolled silently down her cheeks, as she reflected, only one short year ago, she had been walking to the house of God, the joyful and happy companion of her beloved parents; but the remembrance of her mother soothed her, as she thought of her early instructions—that she had not been trained for a life of pleasure, but of self-control and submission to whatever circumstances God might allot to her.—I must learn to bear it all patiently, thought Millicent, and try to do my duty in the situation where God has now seen fit to place me, without murmuring. And, yet, she felt it was, indeed, very trying to be despised by persons, who her pride told her, were decidedly her inferiors, by birth and education. Poor Millicent!—there was a great struggle between right and wrong going on in her mind; sometimes, pride whis-

pered, "Why do you not answer, and show some spirit?"—then conscience reminded her, —"Charity suffereth all things, and is kind." But pride said again, "Recollect, you were brought up an heiress,—don't forget that!" Then, a voice from the past murmured, in a subdued tone, "Those days are gone,"—and her favourite lines from Longfellow came into her mind:—

'Trust no future, howe'er pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead!
Act, act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead.'

That is the way I must act, she thought; and then, lifting up her soft, sad glance to the heavens, she exclaimed, "Father, help thy child!" and, as if in answer to this whispered petition, a voice seemed to reply, "I will be a Father to the fatherless." And Millicent felt comforted as she entered the churchyard.

Staplehurst church was a picturesque old building, covered with ivy—standing on a hill, commanding a lovely view, for miles

around, of peaceful, pastoral scenery, and placed in the midst of a beautiful churchyard, planted tastefully with weeping willows, box, and white rose trees, which last scented the air in the summer with their exquisite flowers. The villagers always stood up when the rector's or 'the squire's' people came into the church; and, as Millicent passed down the aisle in deep mourning, the congregation, who settled in their own minds she must belong to Lord Fortescue, all rose, to the no small mortification of Mrs. Robertson, who was watching for her. The rest of the family were already in church, and Mrs. Robertson made Millicent sit by her in a corner of the pew. The unsuspecting girl thought it a mark of attention, and was pleased at what she fancied kindness; she never imagined the reason she had that seat was, that she might not face Lord Fortescue, whose pew was opposite theirs. He came quietly down (the church,) soon after Millicent arrived, and invited an old man out of the aisle into his pew.

Millicent took one glance around at the time-worn monuments of the Fortescues and Seymours, who had been for so many centuries the possessors of Staplehurst: she she looked up too, at the organ-loft, and the neatly-dressed school-children; at the old-oak pulpit; at the unadorned chancel, and high deep-set windows—all unaltered, unchanged, for many a long year. Her thoughts immediately went flying back to the old church at Heatherton, and a melancholy feeling stole over her, fraught with past recollections, when Mr. Seymour's deep-toned voice recalled her attention.

Millicent thought she had never heard the prayers so well read, nor a more beautiful sermon—the text was, "God is love." The whole of the first part of the sermon, was showing our Heavenly Father's great and wonderful love, in caring for a sinful world, and sending the Saviour on earth, to become our atonement. "Yes, dear brethren," he said, "God did love us, and has loved us ever

since the world began, and yet we refuse to obey his express command, and love each other; we will not, because we prefer hatred to love; it is easier for man in a natural state to tyrannise over his fellow-creatures;—easier to backbite and to slander than to love; easier to wound and distress than to love. But, dear friends, this ought not to be. I dare say most of you will say,—What does this mean—it does not apply to me? But it does. I do not say you would willingly do any injury to your fellow-men; but there are other injuries besides the unjust dealing—there is the cold cutting word, the haughty frown, the wish to make those under you feel their inferiority—the wish and intention to keep them down. Brethren, this is not love."

Millicent looked down—she felt these had already been her trials—Mr. Seymour must know them, and be preaching expressly for Mrs. Robertson—but she did not apply it to herself—though Kate did, and determined for the future to be less proud

to her own family, and more obliging and kind. Poor Katie! she always made a great many resolves while hearing Mr. Seymour's sermons, which, however, she speedily forgot, till some conversation with their rector revived them for a time.

Kate took care to wait for Millicent coming out of church, she was annoyed at her being left to walk all alone on her first Sunday; the children went home in the brougham with Mrs. Robertson, so Millicent was glad to return with Mr. Robertson and Katie, who were both very kind. In the afternoon, Millicent had to stay with the children, who never went to church twice; Mrs. Robertson thought it was too much for them—so, in fine weather they walked out, or else they played with their Sunday puzzles, and got into mischief. Millicent thought she must try a reform, and not allow Augustus to play tricks on the butler—and Fanny to finish her Sunday in tearing her books and plaguing the old nurse, a good-natured creature, who helped to spoil the

children to their heart's content, but who heartily wished they were better behaved, and more like little Miss Seymour!" Millicent formed a plan of telling Bible stories, and asking them to repeat to her as much as they could remember and she began to teach them to sing a hymn, and one or two of the easy chants, so that they might be able to follow the service better, and not stare about the church so much. Those afternoon hours were usually dreadfully tedious to the children, but Millicent tried so hard in her pretty engaging way, to make them pleasant and agreeable to her pupils, that she could not fail to succeed; and when Kate came into the school-room, after church, she found Augustus sitting on Millicent's lap, playing with her curls, and Fanny humming "O be joyful in the Lord," to the Grand Chant.

"Well, you are good children," exclaimed Kate, "what have you been doing with yourselves all the afternoon—you have not been out?"

"No, because of my chillblains," replied Augustus; "but we have had a capital after noon."

"Yes," added Fanny, "and Miss Thornville says I shall sing nicely in time."

"Have you been singing? that is very nice," said Kate, taking off her bonnet and cloak, and sitting on a little stool at Millicent's feet.

"Yes," exclaimed Augustus, "and we have had stories, and I can tell you one, too," and he began to repeat to Kate one of those Millicent had been telling them. Fanny interrupted him a good deal, and Kate thought they were going to quarrel, but Millicent stopped her gently, promising she should relate the next, all by herself; she was sure her sister would listen. And Kate did listen, as much to please Millicent as Fanny—and then she told them about her walk, and the frost, and of an old woman who fell down in the snow; so that it became dark, and the school-room tea came in and found Kate there, for Augustus

would not let Millicent ring for candles before, he said it was "so jolly to have sister Katie, and sit in the fire-light!" And then Augustus made Kate stay, and have some tea with them.

"I wish, sister Katie, you would come and sit with us like this every day," said Augustus.

"I cannot come every day," replied Kate; "but I will sometimes, if you will always be as good."

"I am sure they will try," said Millicent; "mind, Fanny dear, don't drop your toast on Miss Robertson's dress."

"You will come into the drawing-room to-night, Miss Thornville," said Fanny; "all our governesses do on Sunday."

Millicent coloured a little, and Kate looked at her watch—"Miss Thornville," she exclaimed, starting up, "you and the children have been so fascinating, that I have forgotten the dressing-bell, and have only ten minutes to prepare for dinner; Fanny, if you like, you may come and help me."

"Mayn't I come, too?" asked Augustus.

"No," replied Kate, "you shall fasten my dress to-morrow evening; we must not all leave Miss Thornville, it is rude."

When the children came down to dessert, instead of being in disgrace with the governess, and weary and sulky after a dull afternoon, they were cheerful and and pleased, and had plenty to tell about sister Kate coming to tea, and the nice stories. And Kate was pleased with herself, too; she thought she had been doing just what Mr. Seymour would have liked, and she was surprised how quickly the time had passed, and what good little things the children had been. Millicent came into the drawing-room after her pupils had gone to bed, and Kate and she talked and read, whilst the rest dozed till bed-time, which was always earlier than usual on Sunday.

The next evening, Mrs. Robertson was all excitement and expectation about her visitor, forming all sorts of plans for Kate, and already fancying her mistress of Horton Chase, but

Mrs. Robertson, was quite provoked at Kate's entire indifference about her costume, while her mother was anxious she should put on her most becoming dress. Mrs. Robertson did not admonish or advise in Kate's toilette, she never dictated to that young lady, besides, it is highly probable, a touch from Mrs. Robertson's hand would have spoiled Kate's really elegant taste.

Millicent had seen very little of Kate, all day, when, shortly before dinner, she came into the school-room, looking very happy and smiling; she was simply, almost plainly dressed, yet, with an unmistakeable style; and Millicent said in a pleasant tone, "you look very nice, indeed, Miss Robertson!"

"I like to hear you say so," replied Kate, "I think your taste admirable."

Millicent bowed laughingly, saying, "Ten thousand thanks."

"*Apropos* of looks," said Kate, "I want you to excel to-night,—I saw a very handsome crape dress on your bed when you were

unpacking—do put it on and look very fascinating, you know well how—and be in the drawing room when we come out from dinner."

"But who says I am to come?" Millicent asked, doubtingly.

"*Moi, je le dis,*" replied Kate.

"But does Mrs. Robertson know?"

"I told her you were coming," Kate answered.

"I hope she was not displeased," said Millicent.

"You most provoking of mortals!" exclaimed Kate, "I will not answer one single question more—but tell you to look your loveliest;" Millicent laughed, and Kate continued—"Mr. Seymour is coming, we are never complete without him, and Papa thought he would make Lord Fortescue feel more at home,—*au revoir,*—good-bye, children," and Kate was gone.

She only entered the drawing room just in time, for Lord Fortescue came almost

immediately; his usual serious expression vanished, when, after the, "How do you dos," had been gone through, he went and stood by Kate, at the table, and talked to her about his music which he had sent for from London. Kate listened, and talked, and gave her opinion; and a stranger remarking them, would have fancied from her tone of confidence, and his relying, almost diffident manner, that Katie was the lady of rank, and Lord Fortescue, some younger brother, looking up to her for advice. Mrs. Robertson, however, never thought anything of the kind—she was still building *Chateaux en Espagne*, which she, foolish woman, imagined would one day be realised.

As the clock struck six, Mr. Seymour came in; what made Kate's colour deepen, and a brighter expression than usual light up her face, when, he shook hands with her?—She had looked pleased, before, with Lord Fortescue, but now, quite a different expression danced in her eyes, and played in a smile round her

mouth, as she received Mrs. Seymour's messages, and little Mary's love—and a shade of disappointment certainly mantled her brow, when dinner was announced and Mr. Seymour took Mrs. Robertson to the dining-room; she almost started as if from a dream when Lord Fortescue offered her his arm to follow. Clara had always been jealous of her sister, but now, more than ever, as she brought up the rear with her father.—Kate soon recoverd from her day dream, or reverie, or whatever it was, and conversed animatedly and sensibly; with Lord Fortescue, she never talked nonsense; but, now and then, her dark eyes glanced up from under their long fringes at Mr. Seymour, who was patiently enduring Mrs. Robertson.

Kate whispered "*charmante*," to Millicent as she entered the drawing-room, who certainly looked uncommonly lovely that evening,—her black crape told a tale of itself, a tale, whose interest was yet increased, by the sweet young face of the wearer.—She was standing by the piano with Kate, translating the 'Maiglocken'

when the gentlemen joined them; both the girls turned round, and Mr. Seymour came forward to speak to Millicent,—but Lord Fortescue, who had advanced towards the piano, stood as though rooted to the spot—he became almost pale, while his lips trembled, and he looked towards Millicent with an expression, in which surprise and admiration were strongly blended—Mrs. Robertson blindly supposed he was admiring her elder daughter; but Clara, from the other side of the room, was silently watching him, and, with her sharp, keen eyes, saw that the look, the gaze, were fixed on Millicent!—She hated Millicent, because Kate distinguished her, and, because she was pretty and a governess, and treasured up that look in her heart. She crossed the room quickly, and coming up to Lord Fortescue, said—"I hope you like Staplehurst?"

He actually started, but paid no attention to her question. The next moment, however, he recovered himself, and, knowing she had spoken, though he was not at all aware of what

she had said, turned to her, saying—"I beg your pardon, Miss Clara."

"Oh, I only asked if you liked Staplehurst," she replied, looking at Millicent, furtively, to see if she had observed Lord Fortescue's agitation; but Clara need not have troubled herself, for Millicent was completely occupied in talking to Mr. Seymour. Lord Fortescue forced himself to answer Clara's common-place questions; and when these ceased, he stood motionless, his eyes fixed on the pattern of the carpet. There was one other person who had been watching Lord Fortescue, though with a totally different feeling from Clara—and that one was Kate. She had thought he would admire Millicent; but she never expected that almost passionate gaze; and Katie looked fondly, proudly on the orphan girl, and thought how worthy she would be of the affections of such a man as Lord Fortescue. Kate rose, and, going up to him, invited him to the piano, where Millicent was still standing, and introduced her to him as—"My friend, Miss Thorn-

ville." They both bowed, and Lord Fortescue was going to speak, when Clara again came forward, and claimed his attention by asking some trivial question.

"You promised us a song, Katie," said her father.

"You shall have one, Papa. Lord Fortescue, you will sing with us? I have some easy trios."

"Oh, not now, thank you," he replied, hurriedly; "You must sing alone."

"Oh, but, Lord Fortescue, you really must. Miss Thornville and I, have been practising on purpose; you might try the 'Canadian Boat Song'—nothing can be easier."

"I suppose I cannot refuse; but you must excuse mistakes—Miss Thornville, do you take first or second?" He said this timidly, and really to hear the sound of her voice.

"I have a low voice," she replied; "I always sing seconds."

He again looked at her a thrilling look, which she felt. She coloured, and turned away.

"Come," said Katie, "where are our trios?"

Millicent turned over a pile of music, and placed some on the stand. Thanks, *mia cara*,"—said Katie, sitting down to the piano, "now, attention;" and running her fingers brilliantly over the keys, she began.—Their voices harmonised well—they were all suited to their parts; Kate's was a brilliant soprano—Millicent's low and sweet, and Lord Fortescue sang his bass correctly, and with taste.—Every one applauded when the song was ended, and asked for another; and as Katie found Lord Fortescue really understood music, and could sing at sight, she made him continue. No one could ever refuse Katie's—"You must;" so they went from song to song—Mr. Robertson applauding loudly—Mr. Seymour quietly pleased, and Mrs. Robertson charmed with Katie and Lord Fortescue, and wonderfully tolerant towards Millicent. To tell the truth—before Mr. Seymour, she would not have liked to act otherwise; whilst Clara looked on, with pouting lip, and a sense of neglect in her

heart.—After a while, the trio left off singing, and talked, and stood looking over the music; presently, Millicent asked Katie to sing alone; and Katie sang an Italian bravura: the song was very difficult, and required great execution. Kate had been taught by first-rate masters, and she performed her part, as well as they could have desired, had they been present,—then she got up, and made Millicent take her place. Millicent would not sing alone, so Kate told her to play.—She paused for a moment, and then began in strains of exquisite harmony; then the sounds rose loudly, stormily, and trembled and shook like a tempestuous sea; and then they sank gradually, till they died away in a perfect calm. It was music that made one breathless; and a few minutes elapsed ere they spoke—Lord Fortescue was the first to break the silence.—"Oh, thank you; how very beautiful!—is it not Mendelsohn's?"

"It is my own," replied Millicent, timidly.

"Your own?—oh, charming!" exclaimed

Kate; "why did you not tell me before, you played so exquisitely?—it is quite enviable, is it not?" she said, looking at Mr. Seymour.

"Quite a treat, indeed," he replied. "Pray do not rise, Miss Thornville—we are expecting something more."

"Oh, yes," said Katie; "I could listen all night."

Again Millicent played; the melody was quite different from the first, and yet the style was the same—a melancholy pervaded them both. Mrs. Robertson began to feel fidgetty — Millicent was usurping too much attention,—and she suddenly interrupted the general enthusiasm, by asking if any one played bagatelle. Katie liked a change, so she challenged Lord Fortescue and Millicent, to stand herself and Clara. They went into the library adjoining, and Katie whirled about her balls, and kept the marks—encouraged Millicent, and helped Clara. She seemed mistress of the whole room—that proud, beautiful girl!—and even Clara could not help admiring

her, in spite of her jealousy. Lord Fortescue was always hovering near Millicent, talking to her softly; he asked her questions, and listened almost reverentially to the sweet tones of her voice.

"Lord Fortescue, you are vanquished, by twelve," called out Katie. "If you do not care to play another game, perhaps you will come with me into the conservatory; as you are fond of flowers, you must see my variegated camellia, it is full of blossoms,—and so lovely, it well deserves its name of 'Prima Donna.'"

Clara enticed Millicent back to the drawing-room; she was thoroughly vexed with her, for playing such a prominent part, and glad to get her away from Lord Fortescue, who followed Katie into the conservatory. "Miss Robertson," he said, "your plant is indeed a Prima Donna; I never saw a camellia with so many flowers before."

"I assure you, I am not a little proud of it," replied Katie. "This white one was

almost as beautiful, but it lasted such a short time; I cut a flower, this evening, for Miss Thornville, but it fell to pieces directly."

"That is a pity," he said, "white and black look so well together. Do you know, Miss Robertson," he added, after a pause, "Miss Thornville is so extremely like my mother, that I was quite struck with the resemblance, when I entered the drawing-room; next time you come to the Chase, I will show you my mother's portrait, and you cannot fail to trace the likeness as I do."

"It is rather singular," said Katie, smiling, "for I certainly fancied there was a likeness between you and Miss Thornville, and now, I suppose, I was right."

"I was always considered extremely like my mother," said Lord Fortescue, "rather to the disappointment of my father's family, who were always recognized by their family likeness."

"Does not Miss Thornville play beautifully?" asked Katie; "I never heard such taste."

"Nor I," he replied; "she must have had first-rate instruction, combined with great talent."

"There is an immense amount of genius in such impromptu compositions," said Kate; "though, of course, without instruction it never would have been developed."

"I rather differ from you, Miss Robertson; I think such genius breaks forth even unaided by instruction, though, of course, it never attains to any perfection."

"Do you mean to say, then, that if Miss Thornville had never been taught, she could have played as she did to-night?"

"No, certainly not; but her talent must have shown itself, and she would have added one more to the class of self-taught musicians."

"It has never been my good fortune to meet one of these wonders!" exclaimed Kate laughing.

"I have heard several, on the continent," replied Lord Fortescue; "a German, tutor to

a young friend of mine, had never been taught a single note, and yet he played for hours his own compositions, those of others of course by ear. I recollect, too, Sir James Heatherton's——"

"Oh, do you know the Heathertons?" interrupted Kate: "they are Miss Thornville's cousins, and the present possessors of her property."

"What, Heatherton Manor?—did that belong to Miss Thornville?" he asked, in surprise. "I have a faint impression of staying there once, when I was quite a child, but the people and place had quite passed from my mind, till I met Sir James on the continent; I imagine it must have been him I visited."

"It must have been the Thornvilles," said Kate; "it is only three months ago that it passed from their hands."

"The only thing I at all remember," replied Lord Fortescue, laughing, "was a large green parrot, that bit my fingers through the bars of his cage."

"I only heard Miss Thornville telling the children of the green parrot yesterday," said Katie; "you must talk to her about it, she will be so pleased—but how is it you do not remember her?"

"I was scarcely three years old, I believe, at the time," he replied; "and as my mother, who took me there, never talked of it afterwards, I forgot all about my visit."

"Miss Thornville is not quite nineteen," said Katie, "so she must have been a baby when you were there—but how odd you should have been at Heatherton!"

Just then Mr. Robertson joined them, and they all three returned to the drawing-room.

The rest of the evening Katie talked exclusively to Mr. Seymour; and it must have been seriously, for Katie's proud look softened, as it always did when Mr. Seymour conversed on such subjects. It was quite late when they all parted, and that pleasant evening was over; for it was, indeed, pleasant, and Kate and Millicent, as well as Lord Fortescue, never

forgot it—neither did Clara, though her reminiscences were of a different kind from the others; if she had only loved peace more, and making mischief less, it would have been happier for them all.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Buds were blowing, waters flowing,
Birds were singing on the tree;
Everything was bright and glowing
When the angels came for thee.

Death had laid aside his terror,
And he found thee calm and mild,
Lying in thy robes of whiteness,
Like a pure and sinless child.

Brighter, fairer far than living,
With no trace of woe or pain,
Robed in everlasting beauty,
Shall I see thee once again.'

AYTOUN.

THE loved memory of his beautiful mother was treasured and worshipped by Lord Fortescue; during her life, she had been the centre of all his childish happiness—her smile

was his sunshine, and her every sorrow was shared by her noble boy. She was just the being for a child to love; a simple, gentle creature, with not a thought beyond her home and its attractions. When first she had known Frank Hayward, she had given him her full sweet love, trusting him implicitly, and never doubting his affections were firmly centred on her; when first he crossed and slighted her, she scarcely understood him; but when at last the truth was revealed, and her husband's real character, by degrees, unfolded itself, and she was crushed, her cheerfulness and animation ceased—she was calm, and outwardly composed, though she never recovered the shock. Arthur's deep, childish devotion supplied, in a measure, her husband's neglect; but her son never once heard his mother laugh—nor did he wonder, when his only recollections of his father, were hurried visits to the Chase, when his abusive language and cruel treatment were always succeeded by short, though severe, illnesses, on the part of

Mrs. Hayward. The hours which other children of his age spent in boisterous games and mirth, were mostly passed by Arthur in his mother's room—sometimes, seated on her bed, he would hold her thin hand while she slept, and, looking on her pale face, long for her to awake and speak to him; and when, after these illnesses, she at length recovered, it was his delight to walk with her through the shady woods that surrounded the Chase, and listen to her sweet voice, while she taught him many things about the flowers and birds, and then about the God in Heaven, who made them. And when the long winter days set in, they spent their time in study; and after the lessons were over, his mother sang to him in the twilight the old English ballads, for which he ever after retained so much love. During Mrs. Hayward's last illness, Arthur was always with her; he was accustomed to see her ill, and never once thought of her dying, though she often tried to bring his mind to the possibility of her death.

It was on a soft summer eve that Millicent Hayward sat at the open window, propped up with pillows, and Arthur, on a little stool, at her feet; she had been talking to him about the stars and Heaven, and leading the child's thoughts away from herself; but Arthur, who had been reading a little book, called 'The Guiding Star,' would call his mother his 'guiding star,' and talk about what he would do, and how he would care for her, when he was a man. After a time it grew dark, and his mother not answering his questions, Arthur fancied she slept, and, with his usual thoughtfulness—far beyond his years—he got up and closed the window, that the evening air might not blow on her face, and then he went back to his cushion at her feet, and sat quietly watching the stars, and continuing his little plans for his 'dear Mamma,' till sleep overtook him; and when Mrs. Blake, thinking her mistress had sat up long enough, knocked softly at the door, she received no answer, and coming in, found Arthur sleeping calmly in the

twilight, with his soft cheek resting against his mother's lap, who, during her child's sleep, had been carried by angels to Heaven.

The good old housekeeper never forgot that affecting scene; and when persons wondered that Arthur, at his age, was so shy and melancholy, Mrs. Blake grew vexed, and answered—"Her only wonder was, how he ever got over that night."

Lord Fortescue did get over it, but he never forgot, how his 'guiding star' had shone brightly, and then faded away, on that soft summer's eve; and, when years after he came back to Horton, and sat in the same room, and watched the sunset, his heart was sad indeed, for he felt then, how alone he was in the world. All through his long absence, he had treasured his mother's memory; he carried a lock of her soft brown hair, and her picture with him, from place to place. And possessing these relics, he almost fancied she was still near; and being left to himself a great deal, in his continental wanderings, and

having no one but an eccentric tutor as a companion, his mother, though dead, was still his guiding star; and when his uncle wondered, and Lady Fortescue praised him, for being so much steadier than youths of his own age and rank, he used to answer—"It is not my doing, it is my mother's influence;" and when they called him odd, and told him not to treasure up melancholy recollections, he used to wander alone, and frequently weep, for he felt how entirely he was without sympathy. His was a strange unsettled life: his uncle disliked society, and was fond of travelling about; and though at last he settled down at Ashburton, it was not till Arthur was eighteen; and when he went to Oxford among young men, he felt himself different from all around, and, instead of shaking off his shyness and melancholy, he shrank from society, and got the name of "the recluse;" he would have become misanthropic, and perhaps eccentric, had not Mr. Seymour gone to visit his young cousin, and, by his excellent advice and influence, given him that assistance he so

much needed; and though Lord Fortescue was never gay and mirthful, like those around him, yet, Everard Seymour's influence, kept up by frequent correspondence, prevented him from feeling himself uncared for, and induced him to seek, instead of shunning, agreeable association. But now the excitement of Oxford was over, and all his near relations being dead, Lord Fortescue, when he first returned to the Chase, felt inclined to sit down in his old melancholy apathy; but Everard Seymour's conversation had given him a new view of life, and he felt there was something to live for—something to do—and Arthur felt, for the first time, that he was of importance in his sphere, and could be of use to his fellow-men; and this thought occupied him till his dinner with the Robertsons. But, on Tuesday morning, why did he sit so long over the breakfast-table, and leave his coffee and rolls untouched? He was deeply lost in thought, and his reveries were pleasant too, though strange and mingled; and before his view Millicent Thornville was ever present, in her

dark dress, with that look and manner so peculiarly familiar in the memory of his mother;—he was charmed, and yet restless; for he longed to see her again, and gaze on her sweet face; he almost felt as if he must start at once for Staplehurst. But Lord Fortescue knew this was foolish; Miss Thornville would not care to see him; besides, she was Mrs. Robertson's governess: this would raise a barrier against their often meeting—not that he cared for her position. She was an orphan, like himself; and, oh! she *was* so like the one whose memory he held so precious. A strange delicious feeling stole across his mind—could Millicent become his living, his present guiding-star? He determined, though she was separated from him by the rules of society, that he would know more of her; and then, if she were all he thought she must be —— Ah! then he would try to prove himself worthy of her!—And, with these thoughts, Arthur started forth to look at his church and the park wall; in short, to begin his life of activity and usefulness.

All this time Mrs. Robertson had been thinking with delight of her charming visitor and the agreeable way in which her dinner party had gone off; Kate had really looked very fascinating, and Lord Fortescue seemed so engrossed with her at dinner and delighted afterwards with her singing, and then that little *tête à tête* in the conservatory, it all showed plainly that he liked and admired her; and poor silly Mrs. Robertson's head was quite turned.

Clara, who had felt herself in the back ground on the preceding evening was very much mortified and like persons in similar circumstances, disposed to be displeased with every one, and when Mrs. Robertson asked her during their afternoon drive, if she had not enjoyed the party, Clara answered in a pettish tone, "Really Mamma, I don't see there was anything so very delightful in it."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Robertson, "I fancied everything went off nicely, and Kate played her part to perfection; that black net

dress with the pink bows is certainly very becoming to her."

"I think she looks much better in her blue silk," replied Clara, carelessly, "but really, Mamma, I never saw anything like the way Miss Thornville came out in her grand crape dress, it was quite ridiculous, for my part I did not see any use in her coming down at all and playing such a prominent part, just as if she was one of us, it looks so bad!"

"I was obliged to let her come to please Kate, she got in one of her odd moods again, so I let her have her own way for peace and quietness sake, I do not think much harm is done, it is only for once in a way, and I took care to tell Lord Fortescue, she is our governess."

"That would not make much difference when people take fancies," said Clara in a meaning tone.

"What do you mean, my dear?" exclaimed Mrs. Robertson.

"I mean what I say, Mamma," replied Clara, "did not you see how dreadfully struck Lord Fortescue was with Miss Thornville; I never saw such decided admiration."

"Nonsense, Clara," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson; "I am sure Lord Fortescue took no notice of her; as to admiring her playing that was quite natural, as she certainly performs very well, though rather too theatrically for my taste."

"I did not mean her music, Mamma, everyone applauded that, though I did not hear anything so very marvellous; I could play just as well if I practised, but you should have seen Lord Fortescue look at her when he came in from the dining-room—he quite stood still with admiration. I observe a good deal."

"More than there is to see sometimes, Clara," said Mrs. Robertson, who was thoroughly vexed; "I noticed Lord Fortescue when you did, and I saw nothing so wonderful; he looked hard at Kate, and he stood still

most likely from shyness, Kate says he is diffident among strangers."

"He is very silly, then," replied Clara; "but you may say what you like, Mamma, I am confident he admires Miss Thornville; and, if you put her so forward, and allow Kate to make so much of her, she will begin to flirt with him, by and by."

"Clara, I really thought you were a more sensible girl," said Mrs. Robertson; "you surely cannot suppose a young man of his lordship's rank would notice a governess. To tell you the truth, I thought it very amiable and agreeable of him to come so unceremoniously to us, and if he thought about Miss Thornville at all, which, I dare say, he did not, it was to contrast her with Kate."

"Very likely, Mamma," replied Clara, in a satirical tone; and then turned the conversation, not in the least altered, however, in her opinion; and she determined to watch Lord Fortescue and Millicent closely, whenever they were together.

Millicent passed the evening with Kate, studying German. Kate learned surprisingly quickly, and Millicent enjoyed teaching her; it was the happiest hour of the whole day, so pleasantly employed in Kate's snug boudoir. When the usual lesson was over, Kate shut up her books, saying, "I am not going to read a word more, I want to talk,"—and, wheeling her chair round, she put her feet on the fender, and, throwing her head back, looked the picture of comfort.

"I wish you would repeat the articles once more," said Millicent.

"Oh, I shall have a nightmare of articles!" exclaimed Kate, "if you persecute me any more with those wretched little '*der, die, das!*'"

"You are terribly lazy," said Millicent.

"And you a horribly strict creature! Oh, for goodness' sake, don't open the book again!" —and Kate snatched away the grammar, and put it in her pocket, then the two girls laughed cheerfully; it would have done Lord Fortescue

good, in his solitude, to hear them. But Kate's laughs were seldom, and did not last long, and then she said, "I wish you had laughed a little so last night, you would have charmed Lord Fortescue."

"Oh, nonsense, Miss Robertson!" exclaimed Millicent.

"Do, pray call me Katie—it sounds so ridiculous for two girls like us to be perpetually addressing each other as Miss."

"Willingly, Katie—you see how quickly I have learned my lesson."

"Quicker, you think, than I did my poor articles, to-night; but, Millicent, do you recollect I said on Saturday, Lord Fortescue was like you; well, he confirmed it last night by saying how strikingly you resembled his mother."

"Did he?" exclaimed Millicent,—"how very odd!"

"And he told me something stranger still—he stayed at your house, when you were a baby, and he had the pleasure of a bite from your friend, the green parrot."

"My poor old Jacquot!" said Millicent, sadly; "but how came Lord Fortescue at Heatherton?"

"He does not appear to remember," replied Kate; "you must ask him yourself. He really admires you."

"That is your fancy," said Millicent, blushing.

"Not at all," replied Kate; "I should not say so if I did not think it. You know I despise the nonsense, at least, the absurdities of the kind that girls always talk. But he was quite charmed with your playing."

"And your singing, dear Kate," said Millicent, "it was so delightful—as good as a concert."

"I thought we all performed our parts very well. Lord Fortescue has a good ear for music, and keeps such correct time. A man's voice is a great addition."

"And a great assistance," said Millicent; "it brings out the other voices so nicely.——Can that be the clock striking ten?"

"Impossible!" said Katie,—"how quickly the time has passed—that is your agreeable society, Millicent; but I must say good-night, now, the good people down stairs will be jealous. Pray, stay here as long as you like."

When Kate came into the drawing-room, she found Tom had returned. "Well, Kate," he called out, "aren't you glad to see me back again. I've had a precious snowy drive?"

"I suppose so," said Kate; "what have you been doing with yourself at Stocklee?"

"Oh, all the world is full of the annual ball, it is to be something extra splendid this year; they are going to have the band of the 31st over from Gloucester, and lots of the officers are coming, and I don't know how many of the Oxford fellows are invited; there will be first-rate dancing—don't you feel excited, girls?"

"Of course you will go, Mamma?" said Clara.

"Yes, certainly, my dear," replied Mrs.

Robertson; "your Papa has been a subscriber for so many years, it is only right for us to patronise it."

"The fact is, mother likes to show off her girls," said Tom, with a mischievous look at Kate. "My stars! won't we make a sensation—pink gowns and white roses! we shall hear of nothing else for the next fortnight to come."

"What day is the ball to come off?" asked Clara.

"On the third of March," said Tom; "next Thursday fortnight; don't be afraid, there is plenty of time for preparations."

"It does not take a fortnight, or anything like it, to make a dress, Tom; you gentlemen know nothing about ladies' dresses," replied Clara.

"Oh, don't we though? I am sure father does, when he pays the bills for your finery."

"You need not talk, Tom, about extravagance," said Clara; "you confessed to at least a dozen coats the last half year."

"You are mighty wise," replied Tom; "and if I had twelve coats, you had twenty bonnets —let's see, I can count them all up; there was that blue thing, with little bits of stuff all dangling from it, and a pink velvet, with lots of shining little balls, and—"

"Oh, don't be so absurd, Tom," interrupted Kate; "are there many subscribers to the ball this winter?"

"Ah, Miss Kate," said Tom, "I know which way the wind blows; you want to hear if my lord has put his noble name to our plebeian list—now don't get red, it is very harmless—only like a girl."

"I am sure I do not care at all if Lord Fortescue goes or not," replied Kate, proudly; "I assure you I was not thinking of him."

"Well, there, don't be cross," said the undaunted Tom; "the young man has put down his name and title, and all the rest of it, and taken twenty tickets into the bargain, which the stewards look upon as a great proof of his nobility."

"Then of course he will be there," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, in delight.

"Why, what has he bought the tickets for, if he is not going?" said Clara.

"He can't use twenty himself, Miss Wiseacre," replied Tom.

"I know that, as well as you do; but, perhaps he will make a party of friends."

"Perhaps he will, and open the ball with Miss Clara Robertson; take care you study the becoming in dress, and mind your steps."

"I wish you would not teaze me so," exclaimed Clara.

"I was only giving you wholesome advice," replied Tom. "I say, mother!" he suddenly exclaimed, "what have you done with your pretty governess?"

"Never mind about Miss Thornville," she replied hastily; "but don't you think we may make a nice party, and get some of our friends to join us on the third?"

"I think the Conways and the Pearsons

would be very glad, I shall give them some tickets," said Mr. Robertson.

"Pray, papa, don't let the Pearsons be of our party," exclaimed Kate; "we shall be much better alone."

"Kate has never forgiven Bill Pearson his presumption at the pic-nic, last summer," said Tom.

Kate's face grew crimson, and she was going to say something very severe, when Mrs. Robertson interposed. "I am sure, John, we do not want the Pearsons; I do not wish to prevent you giving them tickets, but we might find it awkward to have them of our party."

"Very well, my dear," replied Mr. Robertson, quietly.

"Mother is afraid they will clash with my lord," said Tom; "but we shall be a good party of ourselves; let's see—there is the governor and yourself, the two girls and your humble servant—oh, and your governess, of course! you will take her; that pretty face

of hers will be quite an ornament to the ball —we shall have all the Stocklee fellows fighting which shall dance with her."

"How ridiculous, Tom! I shall not think of taking Miss Thornville; it would be quite out of place," replied Mrs. Robertson, angrily.

"Of course not," said Clara; "I cannot imagine how you can think of such a thing, Tom!"

"Oh, take the poor girl, Mamma; it will be so tantalizing for her to remain at home," pleaded good-tempered Mr. Robertson; "I am sure she is very nice-looking—a girl that no one need be ashamed of."

"I should think not," said Tom, rubbing his hands; "I shouldn't be ashamed of going into the Queen's ball with her on my arm."

"I will not be interfered with," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, indignantly; "it is really very strange I may not do as I like with my own governesses, without perpetually being tormented."

"I think it is she who is tormented," said Kate, in an undertone.

"Who teases Miss Thornville?" said Clara, who always heard everything.

"I did not say any one teased her," replied Kate; "but it is sufficient for an unfortunate girl to be a governess, and she becomes at once the subject of unkindness and neglect."

"It is the first time I have been accused of unkindness to my governesses; I am sure they are made more of here than at most places—but there is a difference between kindness and taking them out of their station," said Mrs. Robertson.

"A lady," observed Kate, "retains her position as a lady, in whatever circumstances she is placed, and, as such, is on a perfect equality with her employers."

"Bravo! Kate," exclaimed Tom; "you and I think alike; mother will come over to our way of thinking too, and we shall see Miss Thornville figuring away as well as the rest of us, on the remarkable third of March."

"I am quite sick of hearing about Miss Thornville, Tom," said his mother; "it only leads to quarrelling."

"Nonsense, mother," exclaimed Tom; "no one wants to quarrel; but it does seem rather a shame to coop one girl up alone at home, when the others are flirting away at the ball. I have half a mind, if she does not go, to stay here myself—we can have a private polka to ourselves; you cannot think what a lot of sweet things I can say when I try."

"Clara, do light the candles," said Mrs. Robertson; "I am tired of this stuff."

"No, I'll light them," said Tom; "you may depend, mother, I shall dream all night of dancing with pretty girls in black crape gowns."

Mr. Robertson laughed, but his mother went to bed quite angry, with her mind full of the ball and Lord Fortescue, who, she concluded, would of course be there, and dance a great deal with Kate—it would be, indeed, delightful, she thought, if he made a party, and had

his aristocratic friends from London; how her girls would shine, and what attention Katie would get! and in these and similar reflections, Mrs. Robertson forgot the vexations Tom and Kate's frequent allusions had caused.

At breakfast the next morning, Tom began directly about the ball, to the great annoyance of Kate, who did not wish anything to be said on the subject before Millicent, till she had talked her mother into consenting that Miss Thornville should accompany them; but Tom was in particularly high spirits, and would not understand Kate's signs and nods of admonition.

"I say, Miss Thornville," he began, "are you fond of dancing?"

"I used to be," replied Millicent, sadly, "but it is a long time now since I have danced."

"I should hope Miss Thornville was too sensible to care for such things," Mrs. Robertson observed.

"What things, mother?" asked Tom, drily.

"You know what Mamma means, Tom," said Clara.

"I am not at all clear about mother's *'things'* that Miss Thornville's good sense is to keep her from."

"How foolish you are, Tom; you were speaking of dancing, and it was to that Mamma alluded."

"Ho!" said Tom; "Miss Thornville, my mother thinks you are the only sensible young lady in the parish; you see what a high character you hold!"

Millicent coloured uncomfortably, and Kate tried to turn the conversation; but Tom was not to be daunted, and he went on—"Sisters, you have heard what has been said, and know your character: you are empty-minded creatures."

"Tom," said Mrs. Robertson, "how can you?"

"Mother," rejoined Tom, with the most comic gravity, "you are a woman of taste."

"Tom, be silent; I think you are out of your mind," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson.

"Then somebody else must have hopped into it, for it is my mind that is giving vent to its opinion now, in pronouncing you a woman of taste, and, as such, you will, of course, send negatives to the stewards of the Stocklee balls, instead of your two lovely and accomplished daughters."

"Come, Tom, that is enough of this," said his father, who saw Mrs. Robertson was very angry.

"I say, Father," persisted Tom, "you and I will have to go in bachelor state, though I expect to get plenty of frowns from the gentlemen who think daughters and sisters are of no use except to dance with."

"Tom," said Clara, who was very literal, "you know quite well we are going to Stocklee. I would not miss the ball for anything."

"Don't mind Tom's nonsense, Clara," said Mrs. Robertson,—"Come, Augustus, finish your breakfast; Miss Thornville is waiting for you."

Millicent knew well enough that meant she was to go into the school-room; and, calling Fanny, she left the room in anything but a pleasant frame of mind. Tom was quietly ensconced in the library, reading 'Vanity Fair,' when Kate came in with a work-box in her hand, and sat down near the window. Tom went on with his book for a little while, then, starting up, he exclaimed — "Katie, what are you doing out there?"

"I am mending my gloves," she replied.

"What is the good of sitting by the window; there's lots of room by the fire; you can have my arm-chair, if you like."

Kate got up, took his offered seat, and went on with her work.

"I say, Kate, can't you talk?" said Tom; "I feel so dreadfully stupid this morning, I don't know what to do with myself. Staplehurst is a dreadfully slow place."

"I thought you were going wild-duck shooting with the Pearsons?"

"That's to-morrow," replied Tom. "I want

some steady in-doors amusement to-day; what do you say to a flirtation with Miss Thornville, for instance, eh, Katie?"

"Tom, you cannot think how you annoy me when you talk so," said Kate, angrily; "really, this morning, at breakfast, you made me thoroughly ashamed of you."

"How?" exclaimed Tom, in surprise.

"It was thoughtless, to say the least of it, to talk about the ball in the way you did before Miss Thornville, it appeared exactly as if you were ridiculing her."

"'Pon my word, I never meant to make fun of her," he exclaimed in a tone of concern. "I did it more to tease mother than anything else."

"I knew that, but she did not, and when I went into the school-room, and found her alone, she had been crying."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Tom, "I'll go and explain to her at once, and tell her I did not mean it."

Kate could not help smiling, and she replied "No, Tom, you will only make it worse,

I told her you did not intend anything rude, but you cannot think it is very agreeable for me to have to make excuses for your folly; it is always the way here, people make mischief and disagreeables, and leave me to apologise and explain."

"There, Kate, don't be cross now," said Tom, "but I always thought governesses liked to be joked with."

"You know better than that, and even if others did, you must see that Miss Thornville is much too quiet and ladylike to enter into or even understand your nonsense, and really Tom, now we are speaking on the subject, I wish you would give up entirely that habit of flirting with every governess that comes into the house, I assure you, instead of being an honour to them it is an insult; remember Miss Thornville is an orphan, and I consider her especially under my protection, and I must insist that you will not annoy her with anything of the kind; I know you would not wish to displease me."

"Displease you? I'd rather do anything than that, though I must own it is rather fun to call forth your wrath a little bit, Katie, you do look so fiery."

"Oh, tease me as much as you like Tom—"

"Only let the governesses alone, eh Katie? but 'pon my word, I did it to make up for mother's ill temper to them."

"No, Tom, you did it for your own amusement," replied Kate, "and instead of making Mamma kinder, it only irritates her; we shall never keep any governesses, if you continue to act in such a foolish manner, and I am sure Miss Thornville will not endure anything of the kind."

"Oh then," said Tom, "I am to be a kind of dragon to the governesses, only the worst of it is I don't know how to be savage."

"That is nonsense, Tom," said Kate laughing; "all I want you to do, is to treat them with respect and proper politeness. You always behave well enough with Maria Conway."

"I should like to see a fellow flirting with

her," exclaimed Tom; "she and Miss Thornville don't do to mention in the same breath."

"Maria would not be very pleased if she heard you," replied Kate; "but Tom, will you do as I ask you, if it it not out of proper feeling to Miss Thornville, at least as a favour to me."

"Oh, I'll do it to please both, there are not two prettier girls in the county; you will see how civil I'll be, you don't know what a fascinating fellow I can be; when I am in my best behaviour, I can rival my Lord himself: but by Jove, there is my lord, and mother and Clara are out—won't they be heart-broken."

CHAPTER XI.

'One only passion, unrevealed,
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
Oh! need I tell that passion's name?'

LADY OF THE LAKE.

MRS. ROBERTSON was very disappointed to find Lord Fortescue had called during her absence; and still more so that he was going to be absent a fortnight in Yorkshire; but as the day fixed for his return was the second of March, she set her mind quite at rest about the ball, and was of Tom's opinion, that Lord Fortescue would bring back a party of friends to join them at Stocklee. Kate felt convinced,

however, that he would not be there, and made her mamma angry by insisting that it would be bad taste even to mention the ball to him, after the recent death in his family; but Mrs. Robertson was obstinate in her opinion—she wished it, and, what she wished, she always concluded must take place. The greatest subject of contention, however, arose from Kate insisting Millicent should accompany them to the ball; but, after a long dispute, in which Mrs. Robertson was decided, and her daughter out of temper, Kate had to give up the point—vexed with her mother for her increased unkindness to her governess, and annoyed with herself that the more she tried to control her temper, and act up to her half-formed resolves, and follow Mr. Seymour's advice, the more she seemed to fail.

The fortnight before the ball was a very disagreeable one to Millicent. Mrs. Robertson had been extremely unjust and exacting, and Clara's cold, impertinent manner was almost unbearable; and, though Millicent did not

wish to join their party on the third, still the cool way in which everything was discussed before her, without any reference to her feelings, tried her very much. Kate was still as kind as ever, and thoroughly disgusted with the perfect absence of good taste and feeling Mrs. Robertson and Clara evinced.

It was the morning of the ball; and Kate, quite wearied with the discussions on tulle and tarletane and becoming head-dresses, set out for a walk to the Rectory: just at the entrance of the park, she met Mr. Seymour coming out of one of the lodges; she hastened on and overtook him.

"I did not expect to see you out, Miss Robertson. I thought you would be busy with preparations for this evening," he said.

"Oh, I have nothing to arrange," she replied; "I sent for my dress from London last week, and I have not troubled my head any more about it—are you going anywhere particular, because I thought you would let me

walk with you; I was on my way to Mrs. Seymour."

"Oh, certainly, with pleasure; I am only going round to put these letters in the post, and then I shall return home to dinner; perhaps you will make it your lunch."

"I thank you, no—I am afraid I cannot—they will expect me at home; but, Mr. Seymour, I have a favour to ask of you," said Kate, colouring.

"I need not repeat what I have often said before, Miss Robertson—how truly happy I shall be to do anything in my power for you."

"I know how kind you are," said Kate; "but it is not for myself—I wanted to ask if you and Mrs. Seymour would not mind inviting Miss Thornville to spend this evening at the Rectory."

"We shall be delighted to see her," replied Mr. Seymour; "indeed, my mother was expecting you would bring Miss Thornville for some promised visit."

"I had intended and wished it," said Kate,

"but I have found no opportunity, Millicent has been so engaged with the children, and I, Mr. Seymour, I have not done one single thing I desired, and since this ball has been on the *tapis*, everything has gone wrong, and I believe it is half my fault—I shall never be what you wish me."

"Let us hope you describe yourself worse than you are," he replied kindly.

"I wish I did," said Kate, sighing, "but really I am so glad you will allow Millicent to join you to-night, she ought to be going to the ball with us, but Mamma decidedly forbids it; Millicent bore it very well, and said she did not care to go, but of course it is very tantalizing for her, and she would have passed a solitary evening, as the children are going to take tea at Westworth, with some little cousins of the Conways, and I really think if you could not have compassionated her, I should have remained at home myself."

There was a dissatisfied, almost distressed expression on Kate's countenance, as she said

this, which did not pass unnoticed by the observant eye of Mr. Seymour, and when he had posted his letters and spoken a few kind words to an old woman, who was bending beneath the weight of a bundle of wood, he said to Kate, as they went on, "Miss Robertson, I have got a little plan to propose to you."

"Oh what is it?" asked Kate, "not another Sunday school-class?"

"No," replied Mr. Seymour smiling, "I am not going to make a teacher but a curate of you: I have already enlisted Lord Fortescue in my service, and now I want you to take two cottages at the other end of the parish, don't look alarmed—it is only to visit a blind girl in one, and in the other you will feel at home—your old farming man, old Crockton, lives there."

"I have no vocation for visiting the poor," said Kate, "I wish it had been something else, Mr. Seymour."

"I have no other post vacant; try it for a month," he replied, playfully, "then if you

do not like it, come and tell me, and I will try and find something else for you."

"Oh no, if I undertake it at all, I will continue it, I am afraid you have a bad opinion of me and think me changeable—you are giving me this to try me;" and Kate looked sadly towards him.

"Miss Robertson, you are mistaken," Mr. Seymour replied. "I assure you it is from no wish to try you, but for your happiness that I planned this little work. I have noticed lately a dissatisfied feeling arising, I am sure, from the want of stated occupation and I thought by giving you something to draw out and interest your kind heart, you might become more cheerful, and, may I say it, more patient—but as to changeableness, God forbid," he added, warmly, "that I should ever impute that fault to you—no, you may want perseverance, but I never yet doubted your sincerity!"

The colour mounted to Kate's cheek, and her heart beat as she replied hurriedly, "you must forgive me, Mr. Seymour, if I spoke

hastily, but no one can have a worse opinion of me than I have of myself."

"If you think so little of yourself, it is time you were encouraged," he said cheerfully; "will you think over my proposal?"

"Oh no," replied Kate, quickly, "I will undertake it at once, and to-morrow I shall go to old Crockton and the blind girl—I should like to be of some little help to you."

"You had better not go to-morrow," he replied; "you will be thoroughly tired from to-night's pleasure."

"I do not expect much pleasure," said Kate; "I generally like the prospect of a ball, but there has been such disputing and opposition about this, that I would almost rather remain at home."

"Oh you must not do that," said Mr. Seymour, smiling; "it would not do to disappoint Mrs. Robertson; you will, I am sure be as cheerful and agreeable as possible."

"I thought you did not like balls," said Katie.

"You are right," he replied; "but though I object to them, and believe that persons are happiest away, still I think it is the duty of those who go to make themselves pleasant to others."

"Then your idea of doing everything well applies to my poor ball," said Kate.

"Most certainly; for if you did not go with the intention of doing your utmost to make yourself agreeable, you should relinquish your place to some one who had that object in view."

"Mr. Seymour," exclaimed Kate, "you do not understand balls; I wish people were half as good as you imagine; but I assure you they go for themselves, and do not care to make it agreeable to others; on the contrary, they frequently make mischief and cause jealousy."

"Then I am sure you ought not to be there," he replied, quietly, "for *you* can take no part in such sin."

"Sin! oh, Mr. Seymour, there is nothing sinful in a ball; mischief and jealousy are

caused everywhere; most of the people are very amiable, though I really think I am geting rather tired of dancing, and prefer a dinner-party to a ball."

Mr. Seymour did not make any answer, and Kate fancied he looked sad; but their conversation ceased, as they had arrived at the Rectory. Katie did not stay there long; she played a little with Mary; received a warm invitation for Miss Thornville from Mrs. Seymour; and then hurried home across the park.

"Do you know if Lord Fortescue has come back, Katie?" said Mrs. Robertson, when they were at luncheon.

"No, Mamma;" replied Kate in surprise.

"Oh, I only thought you might have heard from the Seymours. I suppose you have been there?"

"Yes, I have, Mamma; and Miss Thornville," continued Kate, turning to Millicent, "Mrs. Seymour wants you to go and spend the evening with her. She says you had better

walk over before it gets dark, and Mr. Seymour will see you home."

"How very kind!" replied Millicent in a pleased tone; "it will be, indeed, a pleasure, Mrs. Robertson. I should like very much to go—I suppose they will expect me."

"Of course;" said Kate, "I promised that you should be there early; so you must not make me break my word."

Mrs. Robertson looked as if she did not at all like Kate and the Seymours disposing of Millicent's evening without first consulting her; but she could not find any objections to raise; and about five o'clock that afternoon Millicent started, looking very pleased with the prospect of a quiet evening at the rectory; and three hours later, the Robertsons left Staplehurst for the ball.

All Stocklee was up—not in arms but in excitement on the festive third; and the illumined windows of the old-fashioned Town Hall, sent animation and expectation into the hearts of the damsels, in costumes of many

colours, and their beaux, who flocked up the wide oak stairs to the ball-room, where the band of the 31st was playing the 'Row Polka.' About an hour after the dancing began, Mrs. Robertson—who always arrived late to create a sensation—sailed into the room, leaning on her husband's arm, and looking very splendid in claret velvet and pearls, followed by the Misses Robertson and Tom.

"By Jove, that is a beautiful girl," said an officer, who was leaning against a column, to a gentleman by his side.

"You might look further and not find her equal," was the reply; "she is the daughter of Robertson, of Staplehurst Park, and as proud a creature as ever breathed."

"It's to be hoped she has not bestowed her affections on that young joskin by her side."

"That is her brother, my dear fellow, and the pale girl in pink is her younger sister."

"A dreadful fright," ejaculated the major; "but I will get introduced to Miss Robertson

before long; she is a magnificent creature; and how splendidly she is dressed! there is not another girl in the room at all her equal."

Major Sherwell might well say so; for as Kate moved down the room with a dignified air of perfect unconcern, as if the persons assembled were a matter of entire indifference to her, she certainly did look very grand in her white lace and satin, with long drooping flowers hanging on her shoulders. Directly Mrs. Robertson was seated at the top of the room, she glanced round to discover Lord Fortescue; but after a long and vain search, during which time Katie had been introduced to Major Sherwell, and led off to join the dance, she contented herself with the supposition he would be very late, as all grandees usually are.

"John," Mrs. Robertson said, in a low voice, "I wish you would just ask one of the stewards if Lord Fortescue is expected."

"I don't see what good it will do, my dear," replied her husband; "if his lordship

is coming, asking won't hurry him; and, if he is not, why all the questions in the world would not bring him here, I suppose."

"Oh, nonsense, John—don't be so absurd," said Mrs. Robertson, angrily. "I want to know—there's Mr. Simmonds by the door, he will tell you in a minute."

Poor Mr. Robertson, who was the model of an obedient husband, appealed to the gentleman with a wand, who said he did not know, but the master of the ceremonies did; and Mr. Robertson stood full ten minutes by a draughty door, till Mr. Simmonds had elbowed his way through the crowd and obtained the required information for Mr. Robertson, who was looked upon as *somebody* in the little commercial town. Mrs. Robertson felt quite elated when her husband brought back the pleasing intelligence that 'my lord' had taken tickets for a party, and she settled down her velvet and her feelings, resuming her strict watching of the door, and expecting each fresh arrival to be nothing short of a phalanx of youthful

aristocracy; and Mrs. Robertson was almost vexed to see Katie quietly moving through a quadrille, with a young Oxford man in spectacles. Kate did not enjoy the dancing at all, not that she was disappointed that Lord Fortescue had not arrived, for she had never expected him, but Mr. Seymour's conversation of the morning was constantly recurring to her mind, and his wish that she should be agreeable and amiable was just then particularly difficult to Kate; for some of her partners were stupid, and some forward, and it was not in her nature to be otherwise than cold and reserved to strangers, especially at a mixed ball; and when she returned to the sofa by her mother, after the quadrille was over, she heartily wished herself quietly ensconced by the Rectory fire with Millicent.

"It is very odd Lord Fortescue does not come," said Mrs. Robertson, uneasily; "it only wants a quarter to twelve."

"I had hoped it was later," replied Kate, who was following Tom's dancing, when Major

Sherwell pushed his way impetuously through the dancers,—"Allow me, Miss Robertson, to have the happiness of a galop?"

"I never dance it," said Kate, proudly.

"Oh, you cannot intend to be so cruel!" he said, in an impassioned tone. "Mrs. Robertson, do expostulate with your daughter."

"Mamma knows it is hopeless," replied Kate, coldly. "Major Sherwell, allow me to introduce you to my sister."

The poor Major looked what Tom would have called 'done,' but Clara was too delighted at dancing with six feet of uniform, to notice the difference of his manner to herself and Kate.

"How nice Clara looks with the Major!" said Mrs. Robertson, with a mother's pride.

"Clara dances very well—she is so light," replied Kate; "but, Mamma, who is Tom dancing with? What an extraordinary person!"

"My dear Kate, who can she be?—such a very vulgar girl, and Tom seems so fascinated with her, too! Oh, here comes Lord Fortescue

—no, it is not,"—and Mrs. Robertson gave her undivided attention to the door, till the galop ceased, and Tom, having taken his partner back to her seat, came round to the sofa.

"Tom," said Mrs. Robertson, "it is very late; I am so surprised Lord Fortescue's party does not come."

"Why, they are here already," replied Tom; "that is one of them I have been dancing with."

"Who! when!" exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, in an excited tone; "and where is Lord Fortescue?"

"He is not here," replied Tom. "One would think, to hear you talk, that you are in love with my lord yourself."

"Tush, child!" exclaimed Mrs. Robertson; "but why is he not here?—what has prevented his coming?"

"He never meant to come, mother, that I know of," replied Tom; "he gave all his tickets away before he went to Ashburton."

"Why did you not tell me that before?"

said Mrs. Robertson. "But how did you get introduced to his friends?"

"Introduced myself," Tom answered, with a mischievous smile.

"Did you really, Tom?" asked Mrs. Robertson; "and were they agreeable? Do show me which they are? Is Lady Anne Manvers here?"

"Pray do not talk so loud, Mamma—people will hear you," said Kate; but at that moment the not-to-be-daunted Major claimed her for a schottische.

"Why bless me, Miss Katie has touched the Major's heart," said Tom; "well, he couldn't dance with a better girl."

"Never mind about that, do tell me who Lord Fortescue's party are?" replied Mrs. Robertson.

"One or two of the farmers' families, at Horton; the young lady I had the honour of the last galop with, is his housekeeper's niece; and the rest are strangers. Now, mother, which shall I introduce first to your notice and patronage?" asked Tom, with a provoking smile.

"This is really too bad," said Mrs. Robertson, ready to cry with vexation.

"I told you he did not care for Kate, Mamma," said Clara, in an exulting tone.

"There, have done with match making, and let my lord alone; come and dance with your brother, Clara, you couldn't have anybody better," said Tom; but, just then Mrs. Robertson chose to think the girls could have had somebody better; to have all her bright plans of lords and ladies, who were to attach themselves by some means to her party, crushed, was too provoking, and she was so angry with Lord Fortescue for what she chose to think his neglect, that she determined to assume a dignified coldness, next time they met.

And while Mrs. Robertson was thus worrying herself at the ball, Millicent was quietly amused at the Rectory. She had arrived there a little later than she intended, owing to some delay with the children, so that it was nearly dusk when she went in. Mrs. Seymour was engaged with some poor person in the library, but little

Mary came running with delight to meet her and took her up stairs to take off her things; as Millicent was coming down again she heard music in the drawing-room, and when she opened the door, she saw Lord Fortescue sitting at the piano, playing a plaintive old Scotch air; but as they came in, Mary called out—"Cousin Arthur, here is Miss Thornville."

Millicent only bowed, but Lord Fortescue came forward and shook hands; it was too dark to see his face, as he stood away from the firelight, or Millicent might have noticed the sparkle of delight in those soft dark eyes, and the smile of pleasure so radiant and happy with which he met her, "Miss Thornville," he said, "I suppose I must do the honours till my aunt comes in—will you not come near the fire?" and he pulled the sofa near it; "though all our snow is gone, the March winds are piercingly cold, yet it appears warm here in comparison with the north."

"I suppose you do find a difference in the atmosphere," replied Millicent, as she seated

herself on the corner of the sofa with Mary on her lap.

"You have forsaken me, little cousin," Lord Fortescue said, playfully; "but I am not jealous."

"No, you must not be jealous, cousin Arthur, for Miss Thornville is so kind," replied little Mary, "besides I can love you both."

Millicent blushed and stroked little Mary's hair.

"Shall I ring for the lamp?" asked Lord Fortescue.

"Oh no, please no," exclaimed Mary, "it is so nice to sit in the dark—oh, please wait till Grandma' comes."

"I suppose we must indulge you, Mary," he said; "at least if Miss Thornville does not mind."

"I am of Mary's taste," replied Millicent; "this is a delightful kind of light."

"It is when you have society, but not when you are alone, it is dull work brooding over a solitary fire."

"Are you afraid of being alone then, cousin Arthur?" asked little Mary.

"No, Mary, but the reason I do not like sitting in the dark alone, is, that I have no one to talk with, so I prefer to light a candle and read my books."

"Oh," said Mary, musingly, "but you do not mind being alone?"

"No, but I prefer sitting here with Miss Thornville and you."

There was a peculiar tone in which this was said, that struck Millicent, and she involuntarily raised her eyes, but dropped them instantly beneath their long fringes, as she encountered the fixed gaze of Lord Fortescue; there was nothing like inquisitiveness in that look; it was reverential and almost sorrowful, and Millicent thought immediately of her likeness to his mother, and then of his visit to Heatherton, and she said timidly,

"Miss Robertson tells me you know my home, Lord Fortescue."

"My mother took me to Heatherton once," he replied, "but that was so many years ago, that I have no recollection of the place or people, and had not any idea; till Miss Robertson told me, that I must have been staying at your home and with your parents.

"I have some recollection," said Millicent, "of poor Mamma speaking about a Mrs. Heyward, whom Papa thought so beautiful and so like Mamma, but I never knew she stayed with us, or that you were ever there."

"It is strange, indeed, that our families should have met," observed Lord Fortescue; "in later years, I believe, I fell in with a relative of yours at Genoa, Sir James Heatherton."

"He is poor papa's cousin," she replied, sadly, "but I know very little of him, for, except the short time he passed at Heatherton before I left, I had never seen him; he resided principally in Italy, where Lady Heatherton died."

"I knew their son intimately, but I hear, poor fellow, he is sinking under the disease that carried off his mother."

"Oh, poor fellow, I am so sorry!" said Millicent, "the little I saw of Robert pleased me. I thought he appeared very amiable and clever."

"He is very talented indeed, though a little too pedantic for his age, perhaps," replied Lord Fortescue; "his sisters are very sweet girls, such gentle, amiable creatures, they look too fragile to endure our cold English air."

"Are they not very pretty?" asked Millicent, I saw a picture of them one year in the Royal Academy and I thought it lovely."

"They are certainly pretty, but their beauty is of a very fragile kind, and they want expression, which to my taste is a most essential part of beauty, but they are good girls, and their affection for each other is very attractive; their father doats on them, I never saw a man so completely wrapt up in his family; it is the redeeming point in his character."

"Is not Sir James usually liked?" asked Millicent.

"No; he is a stern, overbearing man, and, I believe, not famed for his honour: perhaps he may have acquired a want of integrity from his long sojourn in Italy—which country, you know, is not celebrated for its uprightness. It would have been better for him, perhaps, had he remained in England."

"And better for others," added Millicent, in a sad tone of voice; "but we forgot the cause of his going. Poor Lady Heatherton," she observed, after a pause, "and her daughters, poor girls, if they are at all delicate, their new home will not suit them, as the situation is particularly bleak, and the wind blows very cold from the sea. I was always a very hardy child, and it agreed with me, but dear Mamma found it very trying."

"You like the sea, I suppose," said Lord Fortescue; "to me it has a peculiar charm, though I have resided so little on the sea coast."

"Oh, the ocean's roar is the sweetest music to me," replied Millicent, her voice trembling

"I have been accustomed to it from a child, and many a time I have lain awake, long after every one else was asleep, listening to the peculiar sound of the ground swell after a storm; and from the time I first walked alone, to the last day I passed at Heatherton, my favourite haunts were by the 'sad sea waves,' and my last home treasure was a bit of sea-weed." Her voice, which had been faltering painfully, here quite failed her; it was the first time she had talked so much of home and of her parents; but there was a peculiar sympathy and quiet interest about Lord Fortescue's manner that had given her courage to enter into the conversation. But when she spoke of the sea, and the recollections it called forth—which were interwoven round her heart with a thousand fond associations—*it was* too much for her, and when Lord Fortescue stirred the fire, the light that fell on the sofa revealed a picture that fascinated, though it distressed him.

Mary had fallen asleep during their conver-

sation, and her flaxen head rested against Millicent's shoulder; and as Millicent bent over her and tried in vain to conceal the tears that flowed unchecked, Lord Fortescue thought the sad expression of the soft countenance, and the long shady ringlets hanging over it, reminded him more than ever of his mother; he was grieved because Millicent was sad, but his gaze was riveted on her—his young, sweet mother seemed to live over again, and he thought of himself as a child, resting in her arms. His was a peculiarly sensitive and romantic temperament, and he sat still, as in a dream—recollecting his mother's death, and how he had cherished her memory, and a strange thrill shot through his mind, as he looked at Millicent, and thought if she resembled his mother as much in disposition as in person, might not his path and hers be the same? But Lord Fortescue had yet to learn that there are many and great obstacles in the road to happiness.

Millicent, who was accustomed to exercise

great control over her feelings, soon recovered herself. "Mary is indeed enjoying the fire-light—there is no object so beautiful as a sleeping child," she said, smiling.

"She would make a pretty picture," replied Lord Fortescue, starting—just then, Mrs. Seymour's voice was heard in the passage, and the next moment she came in.

"Why, Fortescue, all in the dark!" she exclaimed. "Why did you not ring for the lamp?—Oh! and Miss Thornville, you here—Susan never told me; well, I am very glad to see you, dear, but what is the matter with Mary,—asleep! let her wake up now, dear, it will soon be tea-time, and I expect my son in every minute."

"I am quite impatient to see Everard, I have so much to tell him," said Lord Fortescue.

"Well, Mary," said Millicent, playfully, "you are a pretty young lady to entertain visitors! you have had quite a long sleep."

"I couldn't help it," replied the little girl; "it was so comfortable to be in your lap."

"I dare say it was," said Mrs. Seymour, laughing; "no—you must awake now—here is Susan bringing the lamp, and going to clear the table for the tea-things."

"Mayn't I help her?" asked Mary.

"No, my love, you must go and get nurse to take off your pinafore, we shall have papa in directly, and he will be quite surprised to see such an untidy little girl."

"I wish you would come too," said Mary holding out her hand longingly to Millicent. "I want so much to show you my doll's house, and the rocking horse, cousin Arthur has sent me from London."

Millicent could not resist Mary's beseeching little tone, and as she shut the door after them, Lord Fortescue turned to Mrs. Seymour, saying:—"Did you not see the likeness then, Aunt Margaret?"

"Yes, I noticed it strongly just at that

moment," she replied, "Miss Thornville is an admirable girl, I like her very much."

"She seemes to have a great many troubles;" he said, "I had no idea she had been an heiress till Miss Robertson told me."

"Ah, poor dear!" resumed Mrs. Seymour, "it is very sad, but she will have a warm friend in Katie Robertson, she is a very superior girl, and a nice companion for Miss Thornville."

There was quite a cheerful tea-party that evening; and Millicent soon felt at home at the Rectory, particularly as little Mary seemed to have taken her under her own especial care, and did the honours of the muffins and tea-cake with great zeal.

"I expected you back yesterday, Fortescue," said Mr. Seymour.

"I intended coming, but at the last moment, Eager found some business, so I remained till this morning—well, Everard, I have let Ashburton."

"You were not long in finding a tenant; but how did you win Eager over to your plans?"

"Much easier than I expected; at first, of course, he opposed it obstinately, and talked a great deal about injuring the family dignity, but his heart is really with Horton, and when he saw that it was for the good of Ashburton to find a tenant, he produced one immediately; a Colonel Rivers, of Whitby."

"Rivers of the eighty-first?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"Yes, a tall agreeable fellow, with a nice sprightly wife; I entertained them for three days, at Ashburton."

"Mrs. Rivers was Mrs. Robertson's former governess; I married them at Westworth, last November."

"That accounts then, for her knowing so much about this part of the world, but she is an extremely nice person, and seems quite taken with Ashburton: Colonel Rivers wanted to buy it, but of course I told him that was impossible, so he has taken it on a running lease. I think, Everard, you and my aunt would have been amused if you had seen me doing

the honours to a lady visitor; I am afraid she could not have been very comfortable, but she is excessively good-natured, and put up with everything in a very obliging way; the Colonel seemed remarkably proud of her, and every improvement she suggests is to be carried out; I believe he will quite remodel the old place, and I think they both seem to take an interest in the tenantry."

"How did Eager agree with them?"

"Oh, he grumbled and growled a good deal at first, poor fellow! He is crosser than ever after a severe touch of the gout, but he has forgotten his troubles already, I believe, in the delight of finding himself 'at home,' as he calls it; he will find plenty to do, he says, after his ten years' absence, and *entre nous*," continued Lord Fortescue, laughing—"I fancy he thinks he is wanted to look after me! He had not been an hour at the Chase, before he began to lecture me about the park wall."

"He is of my opinion that it ought to have been put in repair before," said Mr. Seymour.

"Oh no, he is inveighing against my extravagance in having all new bricks—I think you said the other evening you liked characters, Miss Thornville; I am sure if you do, you would admire my old steward and attorney, I have despatched him to Stocklee to-night to grace the ball as my representative."

"All our party are there," said Millicent;" "I believe it is to be quite a grand affair."

"Why did not you accompany them?" asked Lord Fortescue, never for a moment thinking Mrs. Robertson would object to take her.

"I did not wish to go," replied Millicent, colouring; "I do not care for balls just now."

"You are like me, then," he said; "though I suppose if it had not been for my uncle's recent death, I must have walked through the rooms to please the stewards."

Millicent could scarcely forbear a smile, when she thought how poor Mrs. Robertson had set her heart upon meeting Lord For-

tescue, and how anxiously she must be looking out for him; but Lord Fortescue asked her to play, and she soon forgot Mrs. Robertson in one of Mendelssohn's 'Lieder ohne Wörte.' Millicent played some time, and sang a duet or two with Lord Fortescue, and then she played a game of chess with Mr. Seymour, and the evening passed so very quickly, that she was quite surprised when supper came up; and after prayers Mr. Seymour volunteered to see her home. Mrs. Seymour told Millicent she hoped she would come very often to the Rectory, and Millicent was able to thank her sincerely for the pleasantest evening she had spent since her arrival at Staplehurst. Lord Fortescue, as well as Mr. Seymour, accompanied her home; and when he shook hands with her, in parting, he said, "I hope we shall soon meet again, to hear some more of your beautiful music."

Millicent, of course, did not know what Lord Fortescue thought of her, but, as she took up a candle off the hall table and went

up to bed, her mind was full of pleasurable feelings. How very differently did the Robertsons return from the ball! Mrs. Robertson was out of temper with every one; Lord Fortescue's non-appearance had quite upset her equanimity; Kate was thoroughly vexed with Major Sherwell for persecuting her with so much attention, and also with Mr. William Pearson, whom she had refused last summer at a pic-nic, and who chose at the ball to be impertinent and satirical; and she was angry with Tom for dancing with vulgar people. She went to her own room that night so thoroughly dissatisfied and disgusted with the ball and the company, that she almost came to the determination never to go to another. While Kate was waiting for the maid to come and ease her of her tumbled finery, she suddenly recollected to have left her watch in Millicent's room in the afternoon, and, thinking it was not wound up, she went softly to fetch it, as she was returning she took one glance at Millicent sleeping so peacefully, with

a smile on her lips, and Kate could not help contrasting Millicent with herself, now so cross and tired, and, yielding to the impulse of the moment, she stooped and kissed her forehead. Millicent opened her eyes and exclaimed, "Oh Kate, dear, have you come home?"

"Yes," she replied, "I ought not to have disturbed you; but I came for my watch, and you looked so sweet, I was obliged to kiss you."

Millicent was now wide awake, and sitting up, put her arm round Kate's neck—"You have had a pleasant evening, I hope, Kate?"

"No, Millicent, I have not, the people were so odious, and I am so cold and tired; I envied you several times, and of course I need not ask you if you were happy."

"Oh yes, I had a delightful evening; they were all so kind, and Mr. Seymour and Lord Fortescue brought me home."

"Oh! was Lord Fortescue there?" said Katie, "I told mamma from the first, he would not be at the ball—but good night, dear Milli-

cent; there is Benson waiting, I must not keep her up any longer, poor thing."

Millicent lay awake sometime after Kate had gone, thinking about her disappointed and dissatisfied look and manner. Could Lord Fortescue have anything to do with it; did Kate care for him?—but she instantly rejected this idea as ridiculous. Yet, in Kate Robertson's proud heart there was a deep, intense feeling, known only to her own mind, and battled against as a sin—as something too unmaidenly to think about; but it had grown and ripened, and become deeper; the more she strove against it, the more it increased, and took greater hold of the noble girl's heart: this was a fixed—rooted love for Everard Seymour! No one knew how she fought against it, and yet she could neither conquer nor soften it. When first Kate had returned from school, Mr. Seymour had been the only person whose tastes and ideas at all coincided with her own. He had taken an interest in the proud, lofty girl, and pitied her uncongenial position; and in

their frequent intercourse, he had entered into her studies, and helped and directed her in a choice of books suitable to her attainments; and while they conversed on subjects of mutual interest, Kate gradually began to find her happiness in his society. When she became aware of the nature of her feelings, her deep veneration for Mr. Seymour made her not dare to hope that he would care for her in return. How could he, when he had so recently lost one so different in every respect from herself? But oh, if he would only care for her some future day!—and in this hope, in spite of her struggles to suppress it, Kate had for four long years lived with the dreary sense of being unloved!

CHAPTER XII.

'Such virtues must prevail, and day by day
Perfect their power; for though of gentlest kind,
Yet urg'd perpetual, such the sternest heart
Must gradual soften, and at length subdue.'

MASON GOOD'S LUCRETIUS.

WHEN Millicent came into the breakfast-room the next morning at her usual hour, as she expected, there was no one there, and not liking to begin breakfast by herself, she took a book and sat near the fire to wait for the first of the party who would find their way down, hoping it might be Kate, when they could have a little talk over last night's events; for Millicent longed to tell her how friendly Mrs. Seymour

had been, and what a loving little creature she had thought Mary, and how Mr. Seymour and Lord Fortescue were the kindest and most agreable people she had ever met; and just as she was recounting to herself some of the delights of the preceding evening, to her disappointment, in walked Tom, looking very stupid and sleepy.

"Pon my word, Miss Thornville, you are an early bird," he exclaimed; "who would have thought of seeing you down? I concluded that the whole establishment was still enjoying its first dream but myself."

"There was no occasion for me to sleep later than usual," replied Millicent, smiling; "I came home by eleven o'clock."

"You had a slow evening, I suppose; I wish uncommonly you had been at Stocklee; we had a stunning ball, such a pick of officers!—Oh, it was a fine time for the girls, it is a pity you were not there."

"Thank you, I did not wish to go," said Millicent, "I was very happy with Mrs. Seymour."

"Aye, she is a good old soul," resumed Tom, "but you surely did not spend the evening alone with her?"

"Oh, no," replied Millicent, longing for Kate to come down and relieve her from this *tête-à-tête* with Tom.

"Mr. Seymour was at home, I suppose, eh, Miss Thornville?" asked Tom.

"Yes," she replied, "and Mary was there, she is a dear little child."

"She is a little trump," said Tom, "worth both our children put together, only she is afraid of me!—I say, Miss Thornville, I wish you would come and make breakfast, you must be awfully hungry by this time, and it does not appear as if any of the good people have turned out yet."

"Don't you think it would be best to wait a little longer?" replied Millicent; "perhaps Mrs. Robertson might not wish us to begin without her."

"Oh, bother waiting," said Tom; "I want my breakfast—come, do be amiable and pour

out the coffee—you would not wish me to starve in the midst of plenty"—and he rang for the breakfast.

Millicent began to feel very uncomfortable; she had strong thoughts of retreating to the school-room; but then, she was really hungry, and also, she must wait to give the children their breakfast; but she determined not to begin herself till they did, and, resuming her book, she pretended to be deeply absorbed in its contents, though in reality Millicent was thinking how angry Mrs. Robertson would be, if she came down and found her alone with Tom. During this interval, the butler had brought in the covers; and Tom, seating himself at the table, called out—"Come, Miss Thornville, it is all ready."

"I shall wait for the children," said Millicent.

"Oh, nonsense, don't be silly!—why not have your breakfast now it's hot—I can recommend you some kippered salmon;" and he commenced filling a plate for her.

"I would really rather not, thank you," said Millicent.

"I did not think you were so obstinate," exclaimed Tom; but recollecting Kate's advice, he thought he must not tease her any longer; and he added—"Well, if you are afraid to eat your breakfast with me, at least don't be so hard-hearted as to refuse to pour out a poor fellow's coffee."

Millicent coloured to her forehead; she thought it might seem silly, and Tom might think she was afraid of him; so she took her seat at the table, and helped him; though she still refused to have any breakfast till the others came down.

"We had splendid dancing last night," resumed Tom, who was bent upon making himself agreeable; "the music was first-rate; it was worth while tripping on the light fantastic toe to such time: the 31st got well complimented on their band."

"I am glad it was so agreeable," replied Millicent; but just then the door opened, and Mrs. Robertson came in.

"Good morning mother," called out Tom; "so you are down at last?"

"Don't make remarks," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, then turning to Millicent, who had got up and was longing for some breakfast—she said in a very angry tone—"I suppose, Miss Thornville, you do not know it is half-past ten?"

"Oh, is it?" replied Millicent; I "thought you would like me to wait for Fanny and Augustus."

"You thought so,—pray do not make excuses; I cannot bear them. I can perceive plainly enough your reason for loitering here —to gossip. I am surprised, Miss Thornville, you don't know better."

"'Pon my word, mother," said Tom, "she did not want to gossip; for I could hardly get her to help me, and then she kept her book, and would not raise her eyes; though it is a treat to see 'em now and then."

"Miss Thornville," said Mrs. Robertson, "you would do as well to retire to the schoolroom; it is your proper place, and the gover-

nesses, at Staplehurst, are not required to pass their morning, making breakfast for my family."

"Mother," interrupted Tom, "that's too bad, she has not breakfasted herself yet."

"Tom, I wish you would not interfere," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson. "I cannot think, Miss Thornville, how you can have had the conscience to waste your morning like this—there, don't stand waiting any longer, but begin at once; the children will be expecting you."

"Will they not want breakfast too?" asked Millicent, who felt quite excited and miserable between Mrs. Robertson and Tom.

"They have had it long ago in the nursery, you ought to have known that, as well as I do.'

"Indeed I did not," replied Millicent, "no one ever told me."

"Don't argue so," said Mrs. Robertson, "but make haste; it is not becoming for governesses to behave in this way."

"I think," replied Millicent, quietly, "I had better go into the school-room at once; I seem, unintentionally, to have offended you

this morning, Mrs. Robertson;" and taking her cup and plate she left the room, with the gentle dignity which never forsook her even in the most trying position.

"Fine airs, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Robertson.

"What is the matter, Mamma?" asked Kate, who just came in through the library; "fresh persecutions for the unfortunate governess, I suppose! I think when the children are grown up, we must still keep some poor victim of a girl, to scold when there is nothing better to do."

"I wonder, Kate, when you will leave off talking about what you do not understand," replied her mother, crossly; "it would not be like you, if you did not oppose all my plans with the governesses."

"Kate's one in a thousand," said Tom; "mother, you were awfully hard on the poor girl; I declare she was doing no harm."

"Harm!" repeated Kate, "No, I should think not; what was the matter, Tom?"

"Oh nothing, only Mamma is a little bit fierce after our night's 'dissipation,' as the parsons call it, and for the want of something to do, she just let off a little wrath: there, never mind, mother!"

"Oh, it is not very becoming in you to make fun of me," said Mrs. Robertson; "I assure you it is no very pleasant thing to have a governess in the house with you, particularly as Miss Thornville seems so fond of flirting."

"I wish she were," replied Tom; "but as it is, she is so demure and grave that I can scarcely get beyond a yes or no, which is too cold for me."

"Tom," exclaimed Kate in a low voice, and, casting on him a reproachful look, "I see you have forgotten our conversation of the other day."

"What was that?" said Mrs. Robertson, in alarm; "some fresh imprudence! Kate, I thought you knew better than to encourage Tom in his behaviour to the governesses!"

"Oh, Mamma, we have had enough of this,"

replied Kate, "you know Miss Thornville and Tom would not do anything to find fault with."

"No, that we were not," put in Tom; "she only poured out my coffee, while she was waiting for the young ones."

"I thought there was nothing to make a fuss about," observed Kate, taking up the advertisement sheet of the *Times*.

Clara usually preferred passing her morning in bed after a ball, and shortly before lunch she got up, prepared to rehearse the events of the preceding evening during the process of hair-dressing, with her confidante, the lady's maid.

"So, Lord Fortescue was not there, after all, Miss?" said Benson.

"No," replied Clara; "but how did you know?"

"Oh, Miss, it was an odd thing, to be sure! —but things are odd now-a-days—governesses ain't what they used to be."

"What do you mean?" asked Clara, all curiosity.

"Oh, I had it direct from Price, and I can assure you, it's all the talk in the servant's hall."

"What is?—how stupid you are, Benson."

"Oh, Miss, about the way the governess came home, and at midnight, too!—it does not look the thing—if we servants walked about at night, Missis would be the first to pass her remarks."

"Did Miss Thornville walk home with Lord Fortescue, then?" asked Clara, impatiently.

"Why, yes, Miss; it seemed like a fore-thought-of-thing."

"Pre-arranged, you mean," said Clara; "but you do not mean to say they were alone —won't mamma be angry!"

"I can't know for certain anything about it, Miss; I believe Price to say, Mr. Seymour was there, but my lord and Miss were walking first, and so sweet on each other!—and they were heard at the door talking about another meeting and some more singing—I should not

be surprised, after Miss Ellerton, if things might take the same turn here!"

"What stuff you talk, Benson," said Clara, sharply; "I will see that Miss Thornville is spoken to, and don't go talking about it in the village, or mamma will be angry."

Delighted at something to turn against Millicent, whom she disliked more than ever, Clara ran down to luncheon, determined to tell her mamma all Benson's account, and prove how right her suspicions had been respecting Lord Fortescue and their governess.

"You might have waited for me," exclaimed Clara, as she found them all assembled—"it is scarcely one, and you know I don't like to find everything cold."

"It is the reward of laziness," replied Tom.

"I thought you had gone out with Papa," said Clara—"you are always at home now—oh, there is the hall bell!—Miss Thornville, do not let Augustus swing in his chair—the children are not half looked after!"

Kate gave a scornful look at Clara, and the

butler announced —"Lord Fortescue in the drawing-room, Ma'am."

"Dear me," said Mrs. Robertson—"how unfortunate! What shall we do, Kate?"

"I will go and ask Lord Fortescue to join us at lunch," replied Kate, rising.

Millicent felt a little fluttered when Kate returned with Lord Fortescue, who after greeting the rest of the family, came round to a vacant seat by her, and said he hoped she caught no cold last night.

"Oh, none at all, thank you," replied Millicent.

"Lord Fortescue," said Mrs. Robertson, "do come nearer the fire; it is not at all agreeable to sit out by the door."

"I prefer it, Mrs. Robertson—but I am afraid I have disturbed you all; I did not intend to come in at your lunch, but I find I have in some way mistaken an hour; I wished to have called before your drive, to inquire how you all are after the fatigues of the ball."

"Our ball went off remarkably well," replied Mrs. Robertson, trying to put on a little coolness.

"I thought, mother," interrupted Tom, with a provoking smile, "you said you were disappointed in it—the company was not so good as you expected."

"You are mistaken," replied Mrs. Robertson, reddening a little—"the generality of the company was excellent; the best we have had since the foundation of the Stocklee balls; but, there certainly were some people, I must say, who spoilt the appearance of the whole."

"Mother is aiming at my friend Miss Blake," continued Tom.

"Oh, poor Miss Blake!" said Lord Fortescue, smiling—"I hope, Mrs. Robertson, she did not transgress in any way?"

"I know nothing about her, my lord; she is not exactly the sort of person I expected my son to have danced with."

"Well, Mamma, she did not trouble us much," said Clara, who was dreadfully fearful

of offending Lord Fortescue—"You had a pleasant evening at the Rectory, I presume?" she continued, addressing him.

Millicent coloured crimson, and Lord Fortescue replied—"The Rectory is always pleasant."

There was something in his tone which struck Millicent; poor girl! she had been crying all the morning at Mrs. Robertson's unkindness, and now she felt ready to cry again at the thoughts of fresh disagreeables from Clara, who resumed—

"It was quite tantalising to hear of your musical performances."

"No one told you there had been music at the Rectory," said Kate, coldly, as she caught Millicent's beseeching look.

"What a funny idea!" said Clara, laughing, though she felt annoyed. "How should I know, if some one had not told me?"

"Hedges have eyes, and walls have ears," remarked Tom.

"Lord Fortescue," said Clara, with a forced

smile, "you must not attend to Tom, he is a shocking fellow for jokes."

"Brothers are usually rather hard on their sisters," observed Lord Fortescue.

"Not a bit too hard," replied Tom. "But come, Clara, out with it—who told you what happened, last night, at the Rectory?"

Kate looked excessively annoyed, and endeavoured to change the conversation; but Tom was in a spirit of mischief that morning, and would not be put down, so he resumed—"Clara, what songs were sung last night—of course, Miss Thornville told you that?"

"Miss Thornville told sister Clara nothing," said Augustus, "for she has been in the schoolroom all the morning, and Clara was in bed."

"Benson told you, Clara," called out Fanny, "I heard her and Price ——"

Millicent pulled Fanny's sleeve with an imploring "Dear Fanny, you must not ——"

But Tom exclaimed, "Finish it, Fanny—finish it!—the man told the maid, and the maid told the mistress!—that's the sum total.

But the mystery now is, how came the man to know?"

"Oh," resumed Fanny, "Price heard something when ——"

"Fanny," said Clara, "your kitten must be shut up in the library; go and let her out. Don't you hear her?"

"Oh, I will go," said Augustus, jumping up.

"No, Augustus, stay here," replied Clara. "Miss Thornville, why do you not attend to Augustus?"

"Never mind the children," said poor Mrs. Robertson, who had forgotten all about her intended coolness in the annoyance caused by this complete *exposé* of her badly-managed family. But, like all well-bred people placed in similar scenes, Lord Fortescue pretended not to observe what was going on, but kept up an animated conversation with Kate, who was talking quickly and with apparent interest, though they both heard the crusade against Clara, and the attacks on Millicent; and it would be difficult to say which pitied Millicent

the most. Lord Fortescue might have longed, perhaps, to take her away from such a humiliating position; and Katie, no doubt, was wishing to burst forth in indignant reproof to her mother and sister. No one could tell the extent of what Millicent felt; the half-hour at that luncheon-table was a season of deep suffering, and, though not the bitterest, it was perhaps the most humbling trial she had ever known; to sit there and be made the subject of rude jokes on one side, and unkind, cutting remarks from the other—and these before a person she wished to think well of her—was intolerable; and, worse than all, to have her name mixed up continually with servants' gossip, which referring to Lord Fortescue, must make him despise her. But Millicent did not know the feelings that were working within his heart, and his sorrow for her, and contempt for Clara, the author of her trouble, She was so miserable, trembling, and frightened, as she sat by his side, that she scarcely knew what she did, and her only relief was, that he could

not see her face, and that he continued talking to Kate, as if nothing were going on. Poor Millicent! she longed with an intense desire to be able to fly back to the past, when she had been the object of attention and consideration alike from visitors and servants;—but those halcyon days were passed, and she was a *governess!*

When, at last, the luncheon was finished, and Millicent rose to return to the schoolroom, Lord Fortescue got up and opened the door for her, and wished her good-bye, with a marked courtesy which sent a thrill of pleasure to her heart; and when she went to dress for her walk, instead of indulging in a burst of tears, she thought of his kind attention when she only expected cold contempt.

"Miss Robertson," said Lord Fortescue, after Millicent had gone, "I think you promised to teach me the seconds to a few duets. When may I claim your kind instructions?"

"Oh, I am prepared to begin at once," replied Kate; "I have been looking out some

music this morning—will you come into the drawing-room."

Lord Fortescue and Kate soon forgot the recent disagreables, in the delight of trying new music; Clara and Tom still continued in the dining-room, the one scolding, and the other teasing to their hearts' content, while poor Mrs. Robertson was concocting new regulations for her governess, reproofs for Tom, and punishment for the children, and intending to repeat her oft-told admonition to Clara, not to make a confidante of her maid.

It was not till just before dressing-time that Mrs. Robertson, found Clara alone, reading in her own room by the firelight.

"Well, Clara," her mother began, "we had a pretty scene at luncheon to-day; it was not an encouragement for Lord Fortescue to come to Staplehurst."

"It was not my fault," replied Clara, turning over the leaves of her book.

"Yes it was partly, Clara; it was most injudicious of you to bring up Benson's gossip

before a visitor, and I must tell you again, I cannot have you so intimate with my maid; you never hear Kate relating any tales from the servant's hall."

"Oh, Kate is perfection," pouted Clara; "she never does anything that is wrong!—She need not have contradicted me so flatly at lunch—if she had not, Tom would never have taken it up and we should have avoided a scene—and after all Miss Thornville was the worst, for letting the children go on as they did, it was positively shameful!—do you intend to keep her, Mamma?"

"I cannot send her away yet, you see she has only just come; but she will not stay long—her behaviour is scandalous."

"So you always say, Mamma, but you never speak decidedly to her."

"I intend to do so seriously, this evening, and if she does not like it, she may leave—I am sure talking of servants being the plague of one's life, they are not one half the worry of governesses."

"Depend upon it, Mamma, it was a preconcerted thing, her going to meet Lord Fortescue last night; even the servants think so, and Benson———"

"Clara have I not often told you I will not listen to Benson's gossip, the servants have no business to make remarks——I asked Kate, and she tells me that Lord Fortescue came in quite unexpectedly, he had not even returned home when the Seymours invited Miss Thornville, and as to his walking back with her, as Kate says, it was the most natural thing possible, since Mr. Seymour was there."

"Kate again—Kate is the Staplehurst oracle! really, Mamma, you are coming round to her views."

"No, my dear, I am not, for I think Miss Thornville is best out of the way, and the society of persons, now so much her superiors, will only make her conceited; but some people make a merit of patronising governesses."

"It is something more than patronising

with Lord Fortescue," said Clara; "did you see how he sat by her in preference to anyone else?"

"Because that was the only vacant chair, and he did not wish to disturb us. My dear Clara, I cannot think how you can get such silly notions into your head, when it is perfectly clear he admires your sister."

"Oh," exclaimed Clara, laughing, "then why in the world did he not come to the ball?"

"Because of his uncle. Think how short a time he has been dead, Clara."

"How you do change, to be sure, Mamma; only this morning you were so angry with him, and now you make excuses—But did you notice his opening the door for Miss Thornville, and the way he said good bye—what did he mean? Come, Mamma, what can you say to that?"

"Clara," said Mrs. Robertson, who was getting quite angry, "there was nothing in his opening the door—some gentlemen do to every one; I have known your uncle Delamere get up even for a dress-maker; it is very ab-

surd, but it is some persons' habit; and the same in saying good bye; those titled people make a point of being civil to every one—I am sure he was stiff enough to her, and the notice he paid Kate was quite marked—you were not in the room when they practised—I am very pleased and flattered, and I shall be greatly surprised if it does not lead to something."

"It looks like it, indeed," said Clara, "when he could remain away all that time."

"It was business, Clara, that must be attended to."

"Before love?" observed Clara, coldly.

"How obstinate you are, child; you never see things till so long after other people."

"Indeed, Mamma, who first found out about Colonel Rivers and Miss Ellerton?—and when you would not even believe he was paying her any attention, they were actually engaged! —who was long in seeing this, Mamma?—If you do not mind, Lord Fortescue will turn out a second Colonel Rivers."

"Clara, I am really angry with you; I do not see what either Miss Thornville or he, has done to warrant you in arriving at such absurd conclusions; he merely walked with Mr. Seymour, when he brought her home last night, and from this you must fly off into all sorts of absurd conjectures; I certainly thought you had more sense."

"Well, Mamma, you will not believe me now, but you will soon; no one cares the least for what I say, but I am positive I am right, and I have my reasons for thinking it."

"Oh, nonsense, child! a maid's gossip is always your authority, and till you can produce something better, I will not accuse Lord Fortescue of any outrageous conduct, like Colonel Rivers."

"Very well, Mamma, we shall see," replied Clara.

When Kate came up that evening into her boudoir, to take her German lesson, she found Millicent waiting for her, and looking very unhappy. The fact was, Mrs. Robertson had

been pouring out her anger, accusing her of flirting with Tom, of neglecting the children, and, in short, talking very fast and angrily. Millicent did not understand a great deal, but she heard enough to make her very wretched, and wish to leave; but she had already found in Staplehurst a few friends she would not like to part with, so she determined not to say anything hastily, and try a little longer to bear with Mrs. Robertson's bad temper, and her other trials.

"I think, Millicent," said Kate, "you would rather not give me my lesson to-night; I am sure you will prefer resting after the fatigues of the day."

"Oh no," replied Millicent, "I would rather not sit and think, it makes me so miserable—I like something to occupy me—so please begin; we are to look over the prepositions to-night, page 380."

Millicent said this in such a sad though resigned tone, that Katie exclaimed, "You poor dear child, I cannot bear to hear you

talk about being miserable," and she stooped down and, stroking back Millicent's hair, kissed her forehead gently. This was too much for Millicent; if any one had scolded her, she would have heard them calmly, but this little mark of affection touched the pent-up fountains of sorrow, and hiding her face on Kate's shoulder, she burst into a hysterical fit of sobbing.

"Dear Millicent," said Kate, speaking cheerfully, and in an encouraging tone, "I cannot allow you to cry so, you will be quite ill. This is a strange way of beginning our grammar—but we will put away our prepositions for to-night; you shall lie down on the sofa, and I will read to you. Will you like that?" But Millicent cried bitterly for some minutes, and all the time, Kate caressed and soothed her; and if the orphan girl had doubted before, she could doubt no longer that Katie really loved her. At last Millicent's sobs became less violent, and soon they ceased entirely, as she said, in a choking voice, "I am

very sorry to have been so silly; I did not intend to give way—but I really could not help it. I hope you do not despise me, Katie?"

"Despise you, Millicent!" and Katie twined her arm fondly round her; "I am only sorry to see you so distressed. Come, you must lie down and rest—nonsense! I will be obeyed," and Kate gently placed Millicent on the sofa. "Now, stay there till I return," she said playfully; and, running down stairs, she came back quickly with a decanter in one hand, and a tin of biscuits in the other.

"Don't stare at me so, Millicent," Kate said, laughing; "I have been doing a daring thing — laying siege to Price's pantry; and while he was ministering to the wants of the drawing-room fire, I put a wine-glass inside the tin-case. And, now; my dear, I am going to turn doctor, and prescribe a stimulant."

Millicent laughed a little in her turn, and said, "Oh, Kate, you are much too good."

"You untruthful child!" replied Kate;

"you told me the other day it was impossible to be good enough! Now, you must lie still, and I will read to you; you may sleep, if you like."

"No, I would rather not sleep, thank you, Katie; I am quite well now—at least, I was not ill, only rather miserable; but I am almost glad it happened so, because now, Katie, I know you love me, or you would never have been so kind—so very kind!"

"My dear child, I have done nothing so wonderfully kind," said Kate, while a tear trembled in her dark eye; "but as to loving you, I will tell you, Millicent, that I not only love, but respect and honour you, and, in return, I have one request to ask."

"What is it, dear Kate," said Millicent, anxiously.

"That you will never think of leaving Staplehurst without telling me first."

"I promise you I will not," replied Millicent; but what made you think of that?"

"I have been thinking a great deal about it

to-day; and I was afraid, if you became so very miserable, you would meditate deserting me, and I could not bear to part, just when I have learned to know and love you."

"Your love, dear Kate, will compensate for many trials," said Millicent, "though I do not know why you should care so much for me."

"That is very different from what Lord Fortescue said to me to-day; I was mentioning you, I believe, in connection with our music, and I said something pretty about you," continued Kate, smiling; "and he immediately interrupted me with, 'I don't wonder that you like Miss Thornville.'"

"Did he say so?" exclaimed Millicent, colouring.

"Yes," replied Kate, enjoying her confusion. "I told you the first night he was here that he liked you."

Just then, something knocked against the door. Kate jumped up and looked out; the passage was quite dark, but she plainly heard some one running down the back stairs.

"Listeners hear no good of themselves," said Kate, coming back, her eyes flashing scornfully; "people had better refrain from listening at my door."

"I do not think any one was listening," said Millicent.

"But I am sure there was," replied Kate.

"Do you think the servants would do so?" asked Millicent.

"No Millicent, certainly not—I am very much annoyed; it is one of the things I most detest; listening is such a contemptible practice!"

"Oh, never mind, dear Kate," said Millicent, coaxingly.

"But I do mind very much, I must go down now—stay here as long as you like—I shall come back by and by—you will find some interesting books here;" and Katie placed a little table by the sofa, with some uncut volumes and a paper knife, and, kissing Millicent, she took up her candle and went away, looking very displeased.

"You do not give us much of your company now in the evening," said Mrs. Robertson, as Kate came into the drawing-room; "you have been away more than an hour."

"Indeed, Mamma!" replied Kate, taking up a book, then putting it down, and, looking straight at Clara, she continued—"I hope you did not hurt yourself just now?"

"When?" asked Clara, becoming very red.

"Only when you fell against my door; I came out to inquire, but you went so quickly down the back stairs, that I could not see you."

"I do not know what you mean," Clara answered, getting up and going to the piano.

Kate followed, and said in a sarcastic tone, "I hope our conversation edified you, only pray come in the next time; I should think it would be much more agreeable, though I have had no experience in such a lady-like employment."

Clara pretended not to hear, and, snatching up the first song within her reach, began to

sing. Tom was out that evening late, so that Clara had not to bear his jokes; but Kate's satirical remarks were worse. The piano was at the farther end of the drawing-room, so Mr. and Mrs. Robertson, who were sitting by the fire, did not hear what Kate said, but they thought something had offended her, by her haughty expression of contempt as she returned to the table, and resumed her book. Clara kept quite at a distance from her sister the rest of the evening, and went away earlier than usual—not to bed, however, for when Mrs. Robertson came into her room, she found Clara sitting by the fire; she did not say much at first, but looked the picture of ill-temper.

"What is the matter, Clara?" asked her mother.

"Oh, nothing, Mamma, only Kate is so unkind; she does not behave at all as a sister. I am sure she likes Miss Thornville much better than me."

"You must not mind her," said Mrs. Robertson, persuasively.

"Well, Mamma, but you must own it is

very hard she prefers a governess to her own sister!"

"That is nonsense, Clara; though Kate certainly is much too intimate with Miss Thornville. It is a great pity she will not be advised, but I dislike to be always speaking to her; besides, if Lord Fortescue's attention becomes serious, she may not be with us long."

"You imagine so, Mamma; but I now know it is Miss Thornville he likes."

"I cannot imagine why you persist in talking so, Clara," said her mother, angrily.

"Well, then, Mamma, I can prove it," replied Clara, in an exulting tone; "I was going down the passage this evening to ask Kate to come and sing with me; when I got to Kate's room, I heard Miss Thornville was there, so I hesitated about going in, and just then I heard Miss Thornville, in answer, I suppose, to something Kate told her, ask—'Did he say so?' and Kate said—'Yes; I told you the first night he liked you.'"

"Shameful!" exclaimed Mrs. Robertson, indignantly. "It was Tom, Kate meant; I

have noticed a sort of understanding between them both, whenever Miss Thornville is spoken of, or is in the way. I must and shall put a stop to this intimacy; the idea of one of our family marrying a governess, is unheard of! —and Kate to act so contemptibly! Go to bed now, Clara, but never listen at your sister's door again.—I shall see into this to-morrow."

"Oh, Mamma, pray do not say I told you!" said Clara, beseechingly.

"Of course, not; now go to bed, I cannot bear to talk any more about it—my son thinking of a governess, indeed, and Kate conniving at it!"

"Indeed, Mamma," said Clara, "Kate meant Lord Fortescue, I know she did; Tom only jokes with Miss Thornville, for the sake of teasing me."

But Mrs. Robertson would listen no longer, she remained obstinate in her opinion; and Clara went to bed in anything but a pleasant frame of mind.

It was nearly ten o'clock the next morning,

the breakfast things were all cleared away, and the butler, after replacing the chairs, and surveying the room professionally, glided out with the crumb brush in his hand. Kate was standing by the fire alone, in her favourite position, with her elbow resting on the broad, low mantel shelf, and her foot on the edge of the fender. To judge from the direction of her eyes, she must have been deeply lost in admiring the shape of her boot; but Kate's eyes, in this instance, told false; she was thinking of herself in comparison of Millicent, and wondering how their young governess could endure all her trials so patiently, while she could not submit to the smallest restraint. At last, she exclaimed to herself—"I have discovered the reason—it is religion, 'the sunshine of the soul,' that sustains and helps her. I wish, I too, possessed this religious influence!" It was the first time Kate had earnestly experienced this desire. She had often longed to be as good as Mr. Seymour, but, then, it was not for the sake of his goodness only, but that she might please

him; now, she felt an earnest desire for Millicent's faith, and she determined to watch her closely, and try to discover how she obtained this faith and strength; and, without knowing it, Millicent became henceforward Kate's guiding star.

While these thoughts were passing through Kate's mind, Mrs. Robertson came in from the servants' offices, with a leather box in her hand, containing keys, bills, purse, and numberless small things she carried with her in the morning. Kate knew the rattling of this box well, and looked up when her mother came in. Mrs. Robertson approached the fire, wearing much the aspect of a person who had made up their mind for something disagreeable.

"You are quite alone, Kate," began her mother.

"Yes, Mamma," she replied, wondering what was coming next.

"Has Miss Thornville gone out yet?"

"I am sure I do not know, Mamma; I never trouble myself about the children."

"I know that," said Mrs. Robertson; "but I thought you were aware of all Miss Thornville's movements."

"I do not understand you, Mamma," replied Kate, hastily.

"I wanted to tell you again I think you are much too intimate with Miss Thornville; you seem to forget entirely she is a governess."

"I never forget that," replied Kate, the colour mounting to her cheeks; "I remember, besides, what others seem to forget, that she is an orphan, and, though poor the equal of any one in Staplehurst; and, because she is nobly fulfilling a post which every one cruelly despises, therefore, I honour and respect her."

Mrs. Robertson studiously averted her face from Kate, and said hurriedly—"You have quite mistaken ideas on the subject; I only hope you will not express them before our friends—I should not say this, if I did not think it right."

"I am not ashamed of anything I do or say," replied Kate, pressing her rings tightly

against her fingers; "I am quite sure *my friends'* views agree with my own."

"You are perfectly wrong there, Kate; you heard what Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Pearson said, only a few days before Miss Thornville came, about not making too much of governesses."

"Mrs. Conway's or Mrs. Pearson's opinions do not influence me," replied Kate scornfully; "I have my own opinions on every subject, and do not copy, like a parrot, every contemptible person I meet; but if I *must* have the same ideas as other people, the Seymours coincide with me; and Mr. Seymour himself asked me to be kind to our governess, which I certainly should have been on my own account: money never can or will make a lady, and Miss Thornville is quite as lady-like, occupying an unfortunate a position as our governess, as when at Heatherton, and heiress to thousands."

"But for all that, she shall never be connected with our family while I can prevent it," exclaimed Mrs. Robertson.

"I do not understand you, Mamma," said Kate, looking at her mother in surprise.

"I hope she will have more sense than to continue flirting after all I have said to her; though your influence would effect a great deal on them both."

"Mamma," said Kate, "this is all inexplicable to me."

"Poor Tom," continued Mrs. Robertson, not heeding her; "the idea of his being sacrificed to a governess, and you encouraging it too; nothing short of this would make me speak."

For a minute, Kate stared in surprise, and then, scarcely suppressing a smile, she said—"You have by some means become possessed of an idea, as absurd as it is incorrect. What can have induced you to think I wished to make up a match between Miss Thornville and Tom;—really, Mamma, it is a perfect enigma to me where it could have originated."

Kate never deviated from the truth, not even in fun; so Mrs. Robertson did not know what to think; but she presently said—"Well, Kate, perhaps you may not really want to make up a match; I hope it has not come to

that yet; but Kate, are you not encouraging Tom's attentions, and making Miss Thornville believe he admired her even the first night they met?"

Kate's face became crimson — "I see, Mamma, where this originates; from an incorrect report my sister has brought you, of what she overheard last night, when she played the honourable and lady-like part of listener outside my room."

"Clara was not listening," said Mrs. Robertson, nervously.

"I suppose, Mamma," replied Kate, coldly, "you will not believe me, but I can assure you no word or idea of attention or match-making between Miss Thornville and Tom, or indeed any one, has passed between us, so pray, spare her the pain of hearing about anything so disagreeable."

"I am very sorry if I was mistaken," Mrs. Robertson began.

"I am not at all, Mamma," said Kate sarcastically; "I see now how good an opinion you have of me, and what full belief you give

to all Clara reports to have overheard. I am obliged, Mamma, for your explanation;" and Kate walked in stately dignity from the room.

Poor Mrs. Robertson stood still for some minutes after her daughter's departure, longing to recal that disagreeable half hour; she had been mistaken, and made Kate angry, by accusing her falsely, and she determined to adhere for the future to a resolution she had formerly made, of never disputing with Kate on any occasion; but she still felt inclined to blame Millicent as the cause of the altercation.

CHAPTER XI.

'Oh! many are the mansions there,
But not in one hath grief a share;
No haunting shade from things gone by,
May there o'ersweep the unchanging sky.'

HEMANS.

LORD FORTESCUE found Mr. Seymour's good advice of great benefit to him; for, what with the superintendence of his church, the care of his tenantry, and the repairs on his grounds, there was little or no time to spare for gloomy reminiscences or forebodings; this new life of landowner was an agreeable one, as it afforded plenty of pleasant work for the mind, and also for his active charity; and all his dependants felt his return among them a blessing, and looked up to their young lord with a feeling of reverence and homage. Every day

was Lord Fortescue to be seen about his estate, now stopping his horse to have a pleasant word with a farmer, and then hearing the tale of some poor labourer, whose cottage he would immediately visit, and inquire carefully into the cause of distress, which in most instances was too true—for, during his long minority, the tenantry had been sadly neglected, and but for Mr. Seymour, they would have had no friend to visit or assist them. At first, the young rector, with his usual energy, had made memorandums of the causes of distress, and forwarded them to the late lord, who generally attended to Mr. Seymour's statements, and ordered relief to the tenantry; but this lasted only a short time, for when the whole family left Ashburton for the continent, Mr. Seymour found himself with the entire responsibility on his hands; conscientiously did he manage his pastoral duties, as the poor were ready to testify; for, from every cottage fire-side, voices rose loud and earnest in love and praises for their beloved rector. All this was extremely gratifying to Lord Fortescue,

whose affection for his cousin almost exceeded theirs, and when he heard the words of thankfulness from many lips, where the poverty was extreme, he lifted up his heart in earnest thanks, that of his abundance he was permitted to minister to the wants of the distressed. The church was nearly finished, and he intended having it consecrated in May, but an obstacle suddenly presented itself. The clergyman whom he proposed nominating had formerly been Lord Fortescue's tutor at Oxford, but on the death of a clerical relative, had come into possession of a rich London living; so Lord Fortescue had again to seek an incumbent; and after many journeys, and a great deal of consulting with Mr. Seymour, shortly before Easter, he succeeded in obtaining a clergyman every way suited to undertake the little district.

During all this time, Lord Fortescue had not met Millicent; though he had frequently visited the Robertsons, had practised with Kate, and attended their musical *soirées*; but, to his surprise and disappointment, Miss

Thornville never appeared. He, of course, did not know the arguments and battles Kate had with her mamma about their governess, and how firmly Mrs. Robertson refused to allow her to join their circle after dinner; nor how, at last, Kate was induced, for peace and quietness sake, to yield her point; and that, to compensate in some degree to Millicent for this treatment, she spent as much of every evening as she possibly could with the neglected girl.

But Lord Fortescue did fancy Millicent had trials, though he knew not how severe they were; he had noticed each Sunday, with regret, as she came to and from her pew, the expression of care and anxiety that clouded her lovely brow, and that she looked thin and pale; and he thought of his beloved mother, who had faded day by day, and whom Millicent so strongly resembled; and he longed to meet her again, and hold intercourse with one whose striking likeness to this treasured memory of his heart had a peculiar fascination over him; and each Sabbath, as Arthur

watched her come down the aisle in her mourning dress, this longing increased.

Some relations of Mrs. Robertson, who were staying at Torquay, had sent an invitation to the whole family to pass a few weeks there with them at Easter. Mr. Delamere, Mrs. Robertson's uncle, who was rural dean of a northern county, had married the daughter of a baronet, and Mrs. Robertson was not a little proud of this connection, and extremely flattered by the Delameres' invitation to join them at Torquay. It never once entered her mind, when she was making preparations for their visit, how dull poor Millicent, who was not included, would be, left alone with the care of that large house; but Kate thought a great deal about leaving her, although she doubted if Millicent would not be happier alone than in the midst of the family circle, where everything was made so disagreeable to her. On the Sunday before Easter, Mr. Robertson took the children with him to visit some friends who lived at a short distance from the Park; Mrs. Robertson and Clara remained at home;

and, for the first time, Millicent was able to accompany Kate to the afternoon service. She enjoyed this extremely; the perfect quiet—the absence from all annoyance—and, above all, the society of her dear Kate, made her feel happier than she often did, now. Lord Fortescue was at church, and saw with pleasure Miss Robertson and Millicent come in alone: he would at last be able to speak to her—and when the service was over, he joined them in the church porch.

"I hear you are going to desert us, Miss Robertson?" he said, as they walked across the churchyard.

"Yes," she replied, "we are going to Torquay; but our stay will not be very long."

"Do you intend calling at the Rectory this afternoon?" Lord Fortescue asked, as they arrived at the gate.

"Yes," said Kate; "I want Miss Thornville to see Mrs. Seymour; she has not visited her for some time."

They all three went into the Rectory, and when Mr. Seymour came home, after a chris-

tening, he found them in earnest conversation about watering-places and favourite summer resorts.

"Have you been to Torquay before, Miss Thornville?" he asked.

"I am not going," replied Millicent, colouring.

"Not going, my dear?" said Mrs. Seymour; "you will be extremely dull alone. Well, you must come very often to us."

"I was thinking," said Millicent, "of going to Heatherton, to see my old nurse; but it is scarcely worth while to make such a long journey when I can remain only a short time there."

"I cannot bear the idea of leaving her," said Kate. "Millicent is not a heroine, under any circumstances, and it will make me miserable to think of her solitary wandering about our deserted rooms."

"Oh, it will not be quite so bad as that, Kate," replied Millicent, smiling.

"But why not come and remain with us altogether, while they are absent?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"Ah, do, dear," said his mother; "we shall be so pleased to have you; and then," she added, "Kate, you need not be anxious about her."

"It will be a real kindness to us both," replied Kate, immediately catching at a proposition that would afford Millicent pleasure.

"It is so very kind," said Millicent; "and nothing could be more delightful."

"Well, then, Miss Thornville, we shall expect you on Wednesday," said Mr. Seymour. "I believe that is the day you leave us, is it not, Miss Robertson?"

"Yes, we leave in the afternoon; but I will drive Millicent round in the pony-chair in the morning, and then I shall make sure of her being quite safe. Do you know," Kate added, smiling, "I feel this child quite a responsibility on my hands?"

Lord Fortescue, though he did not say so, thought it a delightful one, and only wished he might help Kate in her care. This arrangement of Millicent's remaining at the Rectory would be most pleasant: he might then see

her frequently, and he hoped she would be happier for a holiday spent in the Seymours' agreeable society.

"I should like you to see my new church, Miss Thornville," he said, "and Mary can show you her favourite path through the cowslip dell."

"Yes, and the wild hyacinths," added Mary, clapping her hands; "Oh, Miss Thornville, I am so glad; but won't you come too, Aunt Katie?" said the little girl, coaxingly.

"I will take plenty of walks with you, darling, when I come home again," replied Kate, taking her on her lap, "and then the summer will be near; besides, I will bring you all sorts of pretty shells and sea-weed, when I return; will you not like that?"

"Yes, Aunt Katie, very much; but," she added, "I love you better."

Kate bent down and kissed her fondly, and Mary continued—"Next to Papa and Granny, I love you best."

"Mary is very open in her affection," said Lord Fortescue, laughing.

"Kate has a right to a large share of Mary's love, for she was one of her first friends; and, besides, she is her godmamma," said Mrs. Seymour.

"Millicent will enjoy some walks with you, Mary," said Kate; "she has scarcely seen anything of Staplehurst beyond the village."

"We will show Miss Thornville all the wonders of our neighbourhood; it is to be hoped you are a good pedestrian," said Mr. Seymour.

"Oh yes, I am a capital walker," replied Millicent; though she did not just then look capable of a great deal of exertion; there was a languid air and anxious expression on her countenance, which Mrs. Seymour seemed to observe; for she said—"I must not have you over exert yourself, my dear; Mr. Seymour would walk all day long, and never be tired going about his parish; but you do not look very strong, my dear, and I shall not give my sanction to very long walks."

"Oh, I assure you, Mrs. Seymour, I am very well," said Millicent, "and I can walk several miles without being in the least tired."

"Never mind, dear," replied Mrs. Seymour, smiling, "old heads are wiser than young ones; you shall see enough of Staplehurst to make you like it; there is not a sweeter spot in England."

"You are quite right, Aunt," said Lord Fortescue; "our hills and meadows rival any I have ever seen; since I have returned to the Chase, I have found myself constantly repeating the old song—

'———Home, sweet home,
There is no place like home.'

And no one can love their home more than I do; there is a charm in the very word—all the chords of the sweetest music seem to unite in that single syllable!" He spoke very hurriedly, and the tears came into his eyes.

"If homes on earth are so sweet, what must homes in glory be?" observed Mr. Seymour.

"Oh, they will be transcendent," exclaimed Lord Fortescue, at once entering into the subject; "for there we shall have such happy re-unions with our beloved relatives—no more

sorrow or sighing—Oh, the thought is almost too much!" he said, passing his hand across his brow.

"A white-robed multitude, singing of glory, will welcome us," said Mr. Seymour, continuing the subject.

"And the bright angel-faces that will meet us there on the shores of the blessed," added Lord Fortescue, "'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'—Do you know, Everard, your first sermon, the Sunday after the ordination, made a vivid impression on me; and, though thirteen long years full of events, some bitter enough to obliterate any such reminiscences, have passed away, still that description you gave from your father's pulpit, of the entrance of a saint into heaven, and the reception of the angels with crowns, and the harpers harping upon their harps, is to this day indelibly impressed upon my memory."

"That sermon must have been very beautiful," said Kate, "for I have heard my uncle Delamere, who was staying at Staplehurst at

the time, often speak of it; he admired the composition so much."

"It was not the composition, but the subject, which impressed the hearers," observed Mr. Seymour; "it is the one on which I most delight to dwell; and Heaven is a theme on which we kindle and grow warm—the more it is entered upon, the more glorious it becomes."

"I think the most beautiful piece of music I ever heard," said Millicent, timidly, "was from Pearson's Oratorio of 'Jerusalem'—'These are they which came out of great tribulation;' when sung with feeling, it gives a nearer idea of what we may imagine the music of angels, than any other I have met with."

"I know it well," replied Mr. Seymour; "and I perfectly agree with you—the words are surpassingly beautiful, and the music well adapted to them."

"You make me long to hear it," said Lord Fortescue. "Miss Thornville, you play so much by heart, could you try to remember this?"

Millicent took off her gloves, and untying

her bonnet, laid it on the sofa, saying—"I think I know it, but I hope you will excuse any mistakes—it is some time now since I sang it."

Lord Fortescue opened the piano, and stood by her side, while she sat down quietly and sang the beautiful words. The music was, indeed, exquisite, and the effect was certainly increased by the sweet, clear voice of the singer. Millicent did not perform with great execution—she never sang difficult music—but for taste, and a peculiar thrilling sweetness, few could surpass her, and there was such a perfect absence of self, and absorbing of all thought and interest for the time in her music, which rendered her singing very fascinating. When it was ended, they rose to take leave, and Lord Forteseue offered to accompany Miss Robertson and Millicent home, and as they walked together, he said, "It is a great delight to have the Rectory to visit, and feel sure of being always welcome; I do not know what I should do without Everard."

"I do not know what we should any of us do without him," replied Kate, hurriedly.

"We should not think of doing without our treasures, but rejoice that we possess them," observed Millicent.

"That is just like Mr. Seymour," said Kate, smiling; "but, Millicent, do look at those wild anemones—you were only speaking of them this morning."

Lord Fortescue was immediately on the other side of the bank, and, gathering a large bunch of the flowers, he divided them between the two girls.

"I hope you are happy now, Millicent," said Katie; "you have been wishing——"

"For some of my dear Heatherton flowers, these will serve to remind me of them; but, Katie, do bring me plenty of sea-weed from Torquay—I quite long for some trophies of the sea."

"Treasures of the deep," said Katie; "I will bring you shells and star-fish to your heart's content, and I am sure the children will be only too charmed to fill up every little corner of their boxes with reminiscences of Torquay."

'O the sea, the sea, the lone, lone sea!
With its rolling waves so dear to me,
Its coral, its weeds, and wild bird's cry,
And mermaid's song, a sweet lullaby.

Should years be mine to wander and roam,
The wide sea-shore shall still be my home;
The white floating sails, the tow'ring mast,
These are the sights I'll love to the last.

Oh give me the sea, my heart is there,
In tempest and storm, sunshine and fair;
Birthplace and cradle still it shall be,
Home of my choice, while dwelling with thee!'

Lord Fortescue repeated these lines quietly, and as if to himself; but, when he paused, Katie said—

"I will venture to guess the composer of those verses."

He smiled—and Kate continued, playfully—

"They are your own; you improvised them too—plead guilty, Lord Fortescue?"

"I must, I suppose, Miss Robertson; I shall be more careful for the future, how I take a little flight on my Pegasus, when you are in the way."

"Whenever any one speaks of Pegasus," said Millicent, "I always think of 'Die Abassiden.'"

"Oh, yes—the poor Graf von Platen's 'Abassiden,'" replied Lord Fortescue; "it begins—

'Ich möchte wieder wie ein junger Schwärmer,
Auf meinem Pegasus ein bischen reiten,
Doch, da die Zeit betrübter ist und ärmer,
Doch möcht ich flieh'n auf fabelhaften Zeiten.'

"It is very well for you two to quote German," said Kate; "but pray remember I do not understand a word."

"I will translate 'Die Abassiden' for your edification," replied Lord Fortescue; "I have been thinking, Miss Robertson, what delightful days we might make out of doors this summer—you ladies could draw and work, and I could read to you."

"I should enjoy it amazingly; and then you shall certainly treat us to that wonderful German story—what style is it in?"

"Resembling the 'Arabian Nights,'" replied Lord Fortescue. "*Mais vous voilà au château;* so, fair ladies, I must bid you adieu."

"No, you must come in," said Kate.

"Thank you, I really cannot; I have promised to spend the evening with my aunt, and I must not spoil her tea by keeping it waiting; therefore, *au revoir*."

When Millicent returned to the school-room, she did not feel dull, as usual; she had something agreeable to think of—and, instead of the prospect of being entirely alone at the Park, she looked forward to a cheerful time with the Seymours; and, could they have heard her expressions of delight, and known her little fireside reveries of glad anticipation, they would have rejoiced at being the means of sending happiness into the orphan's heart. Millicent told Mrs. Robertson of the invitation, but she made no remark, except to give her permission, so that Millicent could scarcely tell if she were glad or sorry; but that did not trouble her—she was thinking so much of the pleasure in store, which was increased by its being so unexpected.

Since the scene at luncheon, Tom had been quieter when Miss Thornville was present. The fact was, he feared, if he went too far, the re-

sult of his folly would be her dismissal, and the thought of that, Tom could not bear; he was decidedly smitten with the pretty governess, quite as much in his way as Lord Fortescue, but he had tact enough to see that as she was so reserved and quiet to him, the best way to please her would be, to behave quietly also; though Tom's efforts at sedateness were certainly rather droll. There was a decided improvement in the children, which Mrs. Robertson noticed, though she praised them, not their governess; but good Mr. Robertson took care to thank Millicent on Sunday evening, the only opportunity he had of speaking to her unheard by his wife, whose lectures he rather feared, for her care and attention of his 'little people,' as he usually called them; and at these times, and when she was enjoying Kate's society, she felt that though Mrs. Robertson and Clara's unkindness was very difficult to bear, still there was much to counterbalance it; and she seldom or ever thought of leaving Staplehurst to seek another home.

It was very bright and sunny on the Wed-

nesday morning when Millicent came down, dressed for her drive to the Rectory; the pony-chair was at the door, and Kate pulling on her driving-gloves; Tom was there also, standing on the hall-steps, looking at Price putting Millicent's portmanteau in the back of the chaise.

"So you are going, Miss Thornville?" he exclaimed, "and very glad you must be to get rid of those little torments."

"No, I am not," she replied, "but holidays are agreeable now and then, and I expect a happy Easter."

"That is more than I do," said Tom, "you will hear of me dying of a broken heart, before long, though you will not care about it; oh, we poor men are entirely at your mercy, and pretty hard upon us you ladies are!"—

"You seem very miserable this morning, Tom," said Kate.

"Indeed I am, Katie, but where are you going?" he exclaimed.

"I am only going to drive Miss Thornville down to the Rectory," she said, as she got into the pony-chair.

"You had better let me drive, I will do it in style," replied Tom.

"I should be rather afraid you would upset us into the nearest ditch," observed Millicent.

"Upset *you*, Miss Thornville! now that is too bad, it is not enough to part, but you must do it unkindly."

"Are you ready, Millicent?" asked Kate.

"Yes, perfectly—oh, no, I have forgotten my shawl."—

"Tom, fetch Miss Thornville's shawl," said Kate, "it is on the hall table."

Tom brought it quickly, and, looking at Millicent, said, in a piteous tone, "You will not give me one smile before you go. Upon my word, it is enough to drive a fellow mad!"

"That will do, Tom," said Kate, impatiently; and, flourishing her whip over the pony, they drove off, and Tom remained on the steps, waving his hand to them.

"You will write to me often, will you not, Katie," said Millicent, "and give me a description of all you see?"

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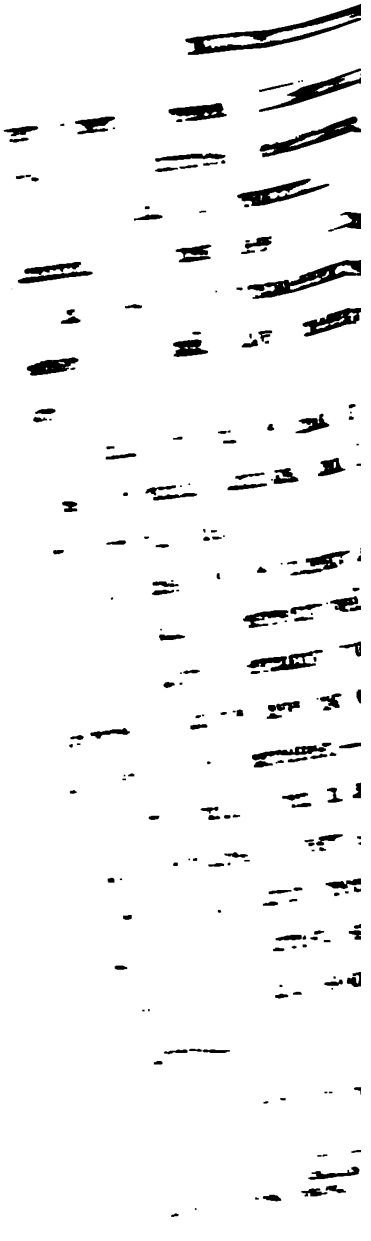

letter paper," replied Kate, smiling, "with views of the churches, beach, &c."

"Yes; and, in return," said Millicent, laughing, "I must keep a minute journal of all that goes on at Staplehurst during your absence; I shall have plenty of time to spare."

"I think you will be glad of a little rest; I was becoming anxious, and I fancied you were growing pale."

"You must not be fidgetty about me, dear Kate; I shall be perfectly well and happy."

"Oh, happy, certainly you could not be otherwise. But we have not been long coming; and here is the gardener,—I will get him to hold Fairy, while I run in and say good-bye."

Kate remained a very short time at the Rectory; and, after receiving many good wishes for her journey, she returned to the impatient pony, and soon disappeared down the Church-lane.

END OF VOL. I.

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